

The Canterbury Poets



SCOTTISH VERSE

The Canterbury Poets.

EDITED BY WILLIAM SHARP.

SCOTTISH VERSE.

*** FOR FULL LIST OF THE VOLUMES IN THIS SERIES,
SEE CATALOGUE AT END OF BOOK.

CONTEMPORARY SCOTTISH
VERSE: EDITED, WITH AN
INTRODUCTION, BY SIR GEORGE
DOUGLAS, BART., AUTHOR OF
"THE NEW BORDER TALES."

LONDON:
WALTER SCOTT, LIMITED,
24 WARWICK LANE.
NEW YORK: 3 EAST FOURTEENTH STREET.

PR
8657
D68

608357

20.5.55

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THE editor does not for one moment claim for this little book that it represents all that is good, or even all that is best, in the Scottish poetry of the period. Had he intended it to do this, a much larger number of writers must have been laid under contribution. But, in dealing with writers who are still, so to speak, more or less upon trial, he has judged it most satisfactory to represent each one *substantially*, rather than by one or two poems merely,—thus enabling readers to form an opinion of the scope and character of each; a course which has necessarily reduced to a very few the number of names which could be included in so small a volume. He wishes it, then, to be understood that he presents his book as a sample, rather than as the highly concentrated essence, of the Scottish verse of to-day and yesterday; whilst for further “Specimens” of Modern Scottish Poets, he would refer his readers to the comprehensive work of Mr. Edwards, of Brechin, the fifteenth and final volume of which has recently issued from the press.

A word as to the manner in which the selections have

been made. Except in the cases of the deceased poets and of three of the living ones—Dr. George MacDonald, Mr. Andrew Lang, and Mr. R. L. Stevenson—the editor has had the advantage of suggestions from the poets themselves. These suggestions have in some cases been slight ; but in several cases the selection from his own work has literally been made by the poet in person. The question may perhaps be asked, Is this method of selection a desirable one ? for has it not often been maintained that the poet is the worst judge in the world of his own poetry ? It may be answered that, in an age like the present, when the critical so much preponderates over the creative faculty, this dictum probably contains even less of truth than at other times. Again, among the writers here represented, not a few are professed critics as well as poets ; whilst in all cases those of his own productions which a writer prizes most highly must possess at the least a special interest for the student. The editor, then, desires to return his best thanks not only for the permission which has been so generously granted to him by the poets to make selections from their works, but also for the assistance which in many cases has been afforded him in making these selections. At the same time he is enabled to feel that a certain share of responsibility as to some of the pieces selected is shifted from his shoulders.

If we now turn to the poems themselves, they will be found to include some very beautiful, and many highly

interesting and characteristic pieces. It will, no doubt, be matter of surprise and of unfeigned regret to some readers that the most distinctive form of Scottish poetical composition—the vernacular song—is almost unrepresented. Alone, perhaps, in the native melody of “Surfaceman” is the ancient genius of Scottish poetry heard once more. And to “Surfaceman”—to Mr. Alexander Anderson—belongs a further distinction of a peculiarly winning character. He has written the ideal poem of the nursery. His *Cuddle Doon* has just that touch of tenderness which—with all their wonderful and delightful reconstruction of child-life—we miss from the nursery poems of William Miller and of Mr. R. L. Stevenson. And though the author is as yet but in middle life, Scotland has already made his masterpiece quite her own—as much her own, indeed, as she has made Burns’s songs. For I should suppose that there is scarcely a cottage—in the southern half of the country at least—where *Cuddle Doon* is not a “household word,”—an item in the little hoard of things of beauty, of humour, and of tenderness, spontaneously treasured by the Scottish peasant for his almost unconscious delectation. Surely to have achieved so much is to have achieved immortality—not, indeed, in its grandest, but in one of its fairest forms. Neither must we omit a word of praise for the kindly humour, and the admirable moral lesson, so soundly inculcated amid such sunny laughter, in the author’s *Big Fittie Jock*.

Next among writers of the vernacular come “Hugh

Haliburton" and Mr. R. L. Stevenson. Their use of the Scottish dialect is quite peculiar, and to a Scotsman highly interesting and delightful. They employ the language of the peasant in the manner of the scholar, and they are the first, I believe, who have so employed it. Of course there have been men of letters, men of learning, before now who have used the dialect; but when they did so they had no aim but to speak as like peasants as they could. With Mr. Robertson and Mr. Stevenson, especially the former, the aim, unless I am mistaken, is wholly different. They are "stylists" in the language of the unlettered. Their classic elegance, their *curiosa felicitas*, keeps step with their command of, with their erudition in the Doric. Is this yet another augury that our native tongue is soon to be ranked among the dead ones? If it be, it is the only happy augury of that sad consummation of which I have ever heard; for in this case death carries within it the germ of a new life. And it is to Mr. Robertson and Mr. Stevenson, and to the followers—for I think there will be followers—in the movement which they have inaugurated, that we must look for a revival of poetry written in the Scottish dialect.

But the gallant muse of Mr. Stevenson has already played many parts in literature. Even here, in the course of a page or two, we have had occasion to refer to the author of *Treasure Island* as a writer of nursery, and of dialect, poetry. His best verse, his most distinctive metrical compositions, must be classed

under yet another heading. His Polynesian *Ballads* are too long to be quoted here in full, and they do not lend themselves to the extract. But, in spite of one noticeable and regrettable falling away, it is in these ballads that the author's finest and most characteristic poetry is to be found. There is a passage in his latest novel—the novel in which, as seems to me, his genius stands for the first time fully developed—which, unconsciously, beneath a figure, exactly sets forth his own position in the literature of our time. He is speaking in the person of one of his characters, who is looking westward over the sea from San Francisco. “I stood there,” says he, “on the extreme shore of the West and of to-day. Seventeen hundred years ago, and seven thousand miles to the east, a legionary stood, perhaps, upon the wall of Antoninus, and looked northward toward the mountains of the Picts. For all the interval of time and space I, when I looked from the cliff-house on the broad Pacific, was that man's heir and analogue: each of us standing on the verge of the Roman empire (or, as we now call it, Western civilization), each of us gazing onward into zones unromanized.” And, so, it is Mr. Stevenson's especial distinction,—a lofty one truly—that he has left behind him the old world, with its old and somewhat worn scenes and characters, and set forth—a literary pioneer equipped *cap-à-pie*—toward the new worlds which yet remain to conquer and to reclaim. In this he is true to the enterprize and to the roving genius of his country-

men. For us he is the Homer—and a truly Homeric Homer—of the Islands of the Pacific.

It is, however, no part of my intention to claim for each or all of the writers here represented a distinctively Scottish character. Without descending to over-refinement, or to artificiality, I could not do so if I would. For, to state a sufficiently obvious fact, the narrowly national character which, during well-nigh four centuries, so plainly distinguished the best of Scottish poetry has in this century entirely passed away. The poets, then, who figure in the present volume are there grouped together almost solely for the sake of convenience. They have the accident of a Scottish parentage, a birth upon Scottish soil, in common, and but little if anything more. Indeed it is by the variety and individuality, rather than by the similarity or community, of their enterprize and their inspiration that the reader of the following pages is likely to be impressed. A few brief notes, dealing in the most general fashion with the scope and character of each writer's work, must, therefore, here take the place of any more comprehensive critical considerations.

Mr. William Bell Scott is the only Scottish Pre-Raphaelite of whose existence I am aware; yet Rossetti in his writings was as much a Scotsman as he. Mr. Bell Scott's finest poetry is to be found among his sonnets, which—though too often marred by faulty rhymes—will probably be remembered for their grace, their depth, and their meditative passion, as among

the finest produced in an age peculiarly prolific in sonnets.

The City of Dreadful Night is the despair of a maker of selections. It is the work by which its author's reputation must stand or fall, and from it alone can he be represented; yet to convey by means of quotation any adequate idea of its sombre and terrifying imaginative grandeur would be impossible. The poem owes its effect to the admirable art by which a powerful and peculiar impression, produced at the commencement, is unflinching sustained and continually heightened until the close. Examined in detail, the workmanship is by no means of an absolute perfection—the verse inclines to halt, minor flaws disfigure the surface. But if the poem be viewed broadly, as a whole, these flaws will be lost sight of; and, as I have already indicated, it is only as a whole that the Epic of Pessimism can be fairly judged. Necessity has somewhat narrowly limited my quotations from it; but if these should serve the purpose of sending new readers to the book itself their end will be attained. Next after *The City of Dreadful Night*, the peculiar genius of James Thomson is perhaps seen to best advantage in the highly imaginative, though somewhat too diffuse and fluid, poem entitled *In the Room*.

In the high spirits, the sturdy prejudices, and the aggressively outspoken opinion of the veteran Professor Blackie, Scotsmen will recognise well-marked characteristics of a certain type of Scotsman; and the Professor also treats by preference themes which are national.

Verse, if one may hazard a guess, has been with him rather a relaxation than a pursuit ; but, whether in verse or prose, everything that he does is essentially *sui generis*. And, in Scotland at least, his appeal seldom fails of a response. Personally I might have wished that he had written oftener whilst in the vein which produced lines so truly Shakespearian in sentiment as these :

“ What live we for but this,
Into the sour to breathe the soul of sweetness,
The stunted growth to rear to fair completeness,
Drown sneers in smiles, kill hatred with a kiss,
And to the sandy waste bequeath the fame
That the grass grew behind us where we came! ”

Probably no man living knows the Border Country, its history and traditions, better than does Professor Veitch, the study of whose verse may well be supplemented by a reading of his *History and Poetry of the Scottish Border*.

There is nothing Scottish about Professor Nichol's work. Learning, weight of thought, condensation of language without obscurity : these qualities—in general more essentially distinctive of the finer Roman, than of English, writers—are the characteristics of his two published volumes of verse. Such a poem, too, as the most purely personal of its author's utterances, the fine and austere *Donna Vera*, seems also to disclose a Roman temper of mind in the writer. Lovers of literature will await with interest the publication of a promised Second Part of his *Hannibal*.

The names of Dr. Walter Smith and Dr. George

MacDonald are naturally mentioned together. The former has rendered into easy verse much of the thought which forms the current coin of the contemporary Broad Church pulpit. He is a voluminous writer, and many of his poems have passed through several editions. His poetry belongs for the most part to the school of Browning; which is to be regretted, for though the author of *Sordello* may be a fine poet he is a dangerous model. The scene from *Kildrostan* extracted in the text contains a masterly dramatic exposition of the gospel according to a certain brilliant living writer who shall here be nameless. But the dramatist fails in humour as well as in justice when he takes Tremain so seriously. The twinkle never absent from the poet's eye, the innocent delight in speculation and in eloquence run mad, the love of paradox for its own sake, remain unindicated in the picture. On the other hand the inconceivable moral cowardice displayed by Sir Diarmid at a later period in the play—whilst completely shattering our early vision of him as a simple young Highland chieftain, *sans peur et sans reproche*—imparts, upon a retrospect, rather an unpleasant flavour to his present single-minded censures. *Kildrostan*, nevertheless, appears to me to remain the most successful of its author's works, and the play the form most favourable to the display of his talents. The great mass of Dr. MacDonald's poetry is of a religious character, and is probably most widely in demand among readers who turn to it for qualities which are not primarily poetic. In its union of pure devotional

feeling with quaintness and simplicity of illustration and expression, it often reminds us of George Herbert's verse. As a poet, however, the author is seen to best advantage in his ballads and Scots pieces; and it is from these that our extracts, necessarily narrowly limited, have for the most part been drawn.

On its first publication, if I am rightly informed, Lord Southesk's *Pigworm and Dixie* met with very rough usage at the hands of certain of the critics. But, viewed in due relation to the author's aim, to me it appears to be nothing less than a masterpiece. The self-delineation of the speaker, Joey Peggram, is as life-like (need I point out that I don't say as beautiful or as dignified?) as a portrait by Moroni, and is dashed in with the spirit and the ease of a Frans Hals. The verse employed by the author is doggerel, it is true; but it is the one medium in which his effect could have been produced. Then the poem is brimful of wit, and the triumph of the whole achievement is that, notwithstanding our categorical detestation of every trait revealed by the uncompromising candour of the blackleg, our feelings towards him in the end are very far from unkindly. We have been parenthetically informed by honest Ben Dixie in another poem, his Confession, that his discarded crony "had some heart"; and this, I suppose, must be the explanation of the singular anomaly. The delightful little piece entitled *The Flitch of Dunmow*—so thoroughly English, not Scottish, in its character—almost seems to recapture once more the lost

charm of the classic nursery rhyme, or of one of those Songs of the People whose words are remembered though their authors are forgotten; and, in an age so starved of animal spirits—at least in its literature—as the present, it can scarcely be too highly prized. These two poems seem to me to suffice of themselves to support a poetical reputation.

To revert to poets of a younger generation, Mr. Robert Buchanan's work is altogether too multifarious and fills too large a space in the public eye to be summed up in a few lines, whilst it is of course much too well known to render any attempt at so summing it up desirable. Something of the versatility of the author's talent may be gathered from the specimens in the text. In *The Wake of O'Hara*, an every-day occurrence of humble life—the unpicturesque humble life, too, of a city—detailed in the plainest verse, becomes the perfect means of a revelation of the author's "gift of tears." In *The Vision of the Man Accurst*, on the other hand, the greatest difficulties of ideal presentment and environment are surmounted with a success no less entire. In the *Coruisken Sonnets*, again, the author appears in person as the poet, contemplative and inspired, of Nature's most repellent fastnesses. Our extracts are based upon the poet's own published selections from his works, with the addition, suggested by himself, of the fine *Confessio Amantis*, in the impassioned verse of which some of his most dearly-cherished beliefs seem to find utterance.

From Mr. Buchanan we turn to the tender feeling,

the classic grace, the "golden line" of Mr. Andrew Lang—a poet, alas! too prone to "trifle" with the Muse. As a translator from the classical poets, Mr. Lang's perfect art has probably never been equalled in our literature. Circumstances have unfortunately circumscribed our selections from his work.

In the work of Mr. William Sharp—as the writer of the Introduction to an American edition of his works has pointed out—the streams of a northern and a southern inspiration—of Yarrow and of Helicon—flow freely and untroubled side by side. He has imported the warmth and colour of Italian landscape into his "impressionist" pictures of Rome and the Campagna, whilst the grey, fateful, low-impending heaven of his native shores closes above the weird of Michael Scott. Whether the writer's aim is perfectly legitimate or not, I do not undertake to decide; but if we would match the splendour of colour in the little poem entitled *The Swimmer of Nemi*, we should have to turn, I think, from poetry to painting, and in painting to the work of Etty.

In presuming to appear in person in the company of his elders and betters, the editor relies on the indulgence of his readers; and, finally, in the author of *Scaramouch in Naxos*, he hails in a luxuriant spring the promise of a rich poetic harvest.

GEORGE DOUGLAS.

LONDON, *September* 1893.

NOTE.

The Editor desires to record his thanks to the living poets represented in this volume for leave to print extracts from their writings, and to the late Professor Minto, literary executor to the late Mr. William Bell Scott, for leave to print extracts from the writings of that gentleman. The Editor also desires to make the due acknowledgments to publishers—particularly to the following:—to Messrs. Reeves & Turner, publishers of *The City of Dreadful Night*; to Messrs. Chatto & Windus, publishers of Dr. MacDonald's poems, and of Mr. Stevenson's *Underwoods* and *Ballads*; to Messrs. Maclehose, publishers of Dr. Walter Smith's poems; Messrs. Longmans, publishers of Mr. Andrew Lang's poems, and of Mr. Stevenson's *Child's Garden of Verse*; and Messrs. Paterson, publishers of Mr. J. Logie Robertson's poems.



Contemporary Scottish Verse.

WILLIAM BELL SCOTT.

MUSIC OF THE SPHERES.

(1837 ; REVISED 1872.)

“All things were created by numbers, and again it must be so.”
—PLATO.

THE Angel of Death through the dry earth slid,
Like a mole to the Dervish Yan,
Lying beneath the turf six feet,
Till he reached the coffin and smote its lid
With his hammer that wakes the Mosleman ;
And whispered thus through board and sheet,
“Arise, that thy closed eye and ear
The things that Are may see and hear !”
The Dervish turned him round, and rose
On his knees at the sound of the three dread blows :
He was alive and a man again,
Yet he felt no earth, nor of it thought,
But rose without a strain.

Friends wept aloud for the Dervish Yan,
And a wife she wept for a Christian man,
A long train of mutes had but lately laid
Under the sward in the cool green shade
Of a sanctified wall whose stones divide
The earth where heretic corses hide,
From that set apart for the faithful alone,
And over him carved his name on a stone ;
But the dead man laughed as he woke below,
For he rejoiced at wakening so,—

“ I am awake, awake and well ;
Am I myself indeed, and where ?—
Here is no light, here is no air,
Here is neither heaven nor hell.”

The Angel of Death stooping clasped his hand,
And silenced him, whispering, “ I command
The power whose song shall answer thee,—
As it hath been, so shall it be.”

Beneath the head
When the Jew is dead
Is a clod of quick clay kneaden :
And as the mourners backward go,
Three turfs, green turfs, to the grave they throw,
Saying, “ Thou shalt like these green turfs grow,
May thy soul be buried in Eden.”
Thus in the Levites' vault was laid
A Rabbi, thus were the last rites paid,
At the same time that the Summoner
Made the two Gentile corses stir,
And with a writhe like theirs, his eyes
The Rabbi opening, tried to rise.
“ Have the demons power o'er me ?” he cries,
Dragging himself with painful toil

From the mould which is the earth-worm's spoil,
And trembled to hear the words "Follow thou too,
Within the sphere of the melody
That re-createth those who die!"

And thus have these three mortals passed,
Being dead, into the formless vast,
Which we in life, expectant, still
By creeds and myths and fancies, fill
With hopes and fears like life on earth,—
Things for the days 'tween death and birth,
For which we care not any more
Down upon the further shore.

"By what uncertain sense we're led,
Born thus again—the body dead
Our mother—the grave our nursing bed!

"Haunted still with hearth and home,
Hammer in hand, sword, pen, and tome,
Sun and moon and starry dome.

"Morn till evening toil-in-vain,
Market loss and market gain,
Restless sea and wheaten plain.

"Down the darkness go we still,
Go we without choice of will;
From Gentile's scoff and scorner's rail,
From worm and asp, from kiss and wail;
From master's whip, Muezzim's cry,
Camel and rice, and blank white sky.

“Carried or driven, through sea, through air,
Carried sheer down by cloud or stair,
Are we or are we not—whither away?
Phantoms of life’s fever-day.
Can we not return again,
As leaves come after spring-time’s rain?
The trumpet cannot call the dead,
Yet I hear it overhead;
A madman’s sleep is thick and brief;
The dawn would give us all relief!—
Ah, ’tis gone, and thou, the dearest!
Thou with moonlike light appearest;
Thou, mine own, beside the hearth,
Assiduous with childish mirth—
Dreams, only dreams! the past doth cry,
In the throes of dissolving memory.
O brother spectres who have come
Out of yourselves,—oh, can ye tell,
Rise we or sink—to heaven or hell?
But even now with my own old eyes
I saw the ghost of myself arise;
And then forthwith I was beguiled
To think myself again a child.
But what, alas! are those below
That to and fro
Pass like men walking fast, and then
Pass the very same again?
Alike they are, even every one,
Not as men beneath the sun;—
Now they stalk our heads above,
Now beneath our feet they move,
Now they pass through us quite, as though
Shadows with like shadows blent,
Shadows from some real things sent,
We their shadows cannot know!

Gone, gone, gone ! a fiery wind
 Severs the vision, and mountain or flood,
 City or temple, or cedar-wood,
 Or rock-walls with their multitude
 Of caverns void and blind,
 Fragments of this baseless world,
 About us are flashed out and furled ;
 And phantoms without number vast,
 Interlace the insane dream,
 Hurtle together, and never get past :
 And a leprous light, a light and breath,
 Like the phosphor in the eyes of Death,
 Follows each phantom ; down they stream,
 Wingless, from above descending,
 Straight and stiff ; nor is the hair
 On their rigid shoulders pending
 Stirred by any fitful air.
 Together they rush now, from near and far,
 As if around a central war,
 And now in circles whirl, while we—
 We cleave the whirlpool steadily.
 If any god still hears our wail,
 For an hour again
 Let us be men,
 Or now cease utterly and fail
 To know ourselves, to think and be !

“ Hath our prayer been heard ? Ah, no ;
 Spectres that have never trod
 Earth with man or heaven with God
 Rise stark and slow ;
 Rings of gold
 About their corded locks are rolled,
 Dreadful symbols of dead creeds,

And dripping brands
Are in their hands ;—
Naked giants ! how they hold
By the nostrils monstrous steeds !
They meet, they rush together : now
The furies of battle are over all,
And some struggle upwards in pain, some fall
Sheer through the seething gulf below ;—
Allah el Allah, how are we
In this collapsing death-strife free ?
Oh, that we could dissolve at once
To nothingness ;—advance,
Ye barbed giants ! smoke and fire
Lap us round till we expire,—
Expire, cease utterly and fail
To retract ourselves, to think and be !”

Thus the dead men from the grave
Wailed as they went ; but who can say
How to paint the unknown way
Within the wondrous door of death ?
Or what the mysteries are that pave
The path to New Life, when the breath
And senses cease to be, as now,
The guardians of our souls ? The plough
Casts up bones where warriors trod,
Belted, plumed, and iron-shod ;
Those shreds the plough exhumes, I deem,
Little like the warriors seem.

Two lights, two haloed lights appear,
Round like the moon at the fall of the year,
When the sky is mantled o’er
With a fleece of mist, and of all the store

Of stars, not one can penetrate
 To the traveller's eye till the night be late.
 Two haloes slowly and steadily
 Advancing like a double day,
 Increasing in beauty more and more ;—
 Behold ! they are the tires of light
 On the heads of gods, and a golden sound,
 Swooning and recreating, wound
 From those two haloes, passed right round
 The dead men's hearts with a painful might.
 Would I could say
 Whose voices or whose harps were they,
 That had such vital force divine,
 Holy Spirit, like to thine !
 But what was the song
 That bore along
 These weary ghosts with a power so strong ?
 If we could repeat that lay
 In the light of upper day,
 It might unravel warp and woof
 Of this prisoned conscious Life
 Tear all sensuous ties aloof ;
 Of good and ill unwind the strife :
 Interweave it with amaranth again,
 Die it with nepenthe bloom,
 That we no more knew sin or pain,
 Nor feared the darks beyond the tomb !

But what was the song
 That bore along
 Those dead hearts with a power so strong ?
 Would I could repeat the lay
 In the dull light of this cold day ;
 Wean the soul from the thirst to know,

By wisdom be as gods, that so
The slave unmanacle his hand,
The ploughshare rest upon the land.

When the sound of the wires
Of those holy lyres
Had the dead men's lives remade,
Did their shadows remain in the world of shade,
Their flesh in the earth
That gave it birth?
Then in what were they arrayed?
But the child just born forgetteth quite
Its ante-natal garments; night
And utter change doth interpose,
And when this life over the body doth close,
And the freed Soul hears without ears the hymn,
Sphere-music of God's cherubim,
And sees the haloed powers below,—
Utterly changeth it also;
And after the new birth again
Forget the ante-natal gain?
We cannot know.

THE WITCH'S BALLAD.

O, I HAE come from far away,
From a warm land far away,
A southern land across the sea,
With sailor-lads about the mast,
Merry and canny, and kind to me.

And I hae been to yon town,
 To try my luck in yon town ;
Nort, and Mysie, Elspie too.
Right braw we were to pass the gate,
Wi' gowden clasps on girdles blue.

Mysie smiled wi' miminy mouth,
 Innocent mouth, miminy mouth
Elspie wore her scarlet gown,
Nort's grey eyes were unco gleg,
My Castile comb was like a crown.

We walked abreast all up the street,
 Into the market up the street ;
Our hair with marygolds was wound,
Our bodices with love-knots laced,
Our merchandise with tansy bound.

Nort had chickens, I had cocks,
 Gamesome cocks, loud-crowing cocks ;
Mysie ducks, and Elspie drakes,—
For a wee groat or a pound :
We lost nae time wi' gives and takes.

Lost nae time, for well we knew,
 In our sleeves full well we knew,
When the gloaming came that night,
Duck nor drake nor hen nor cock
Would be found by candle-light.

And when our chaffering all was done,
All was paid for, sold and done,
We drew a glove on ilka hand,
We sweetly curtsied each to each,
And deftly danced a saraband.

The market lasses looked and laughed,
Left their gear and looked and laughed ;
They made as they would join the game,
But soon their mithers, wild and wud,
With whack and screech they stopped the same.

Sae loud the tongues o' randies grew,
The flitin' and the skirlin' grew,
At all the windows in the place,
Wi' spoons or knives, wi' needle or awl,
Was thrust out every hand and face.

And down each stair they thronged anon,
Gentle, semple, thronged anon ;
Souter and tailor, frowsy Nan,
The ancient widow young again,
Simpering behind her fan.

Without a choice, against their will,
Doited, dazed, against their will,
The market lassie and her mither,
The farmer and his husbandman,
Hand in hand dance a' thegither.

Slow at first, but faster soon,
Still increasing wild and fast,
Hoods and mantles, hats and hose,
Blindly doffed and cast away,
Left them naked, heads and toes.

They would have torn us limb from limb,
Dainty limb from dainty limb ;
But never one of them could win
Across the line that I had drawn
With bleeding thumb a-widdershin.

But there was Jeff the provost's son,
Jeff the provost's only son ;
There was Father Auld himsel',
The Lombard frae the hostelry,
And the lawyer Peter Fell.

All goodly men we singled out,
Waled them well, and singled out,
And drew them by the left hand in ;
Mysie the priest, and Elspie won
The Lombard, Nort the lawyer carle,
I mysel' the provost's son.

Then, with cantrip kisses seven,
Three times round with kisses seven,
Warped and woven there spun we,
Arms and legs and flaming hair,
Like a whirlwind on the sea.

Like the wind that sucks the sea,
 Over and in and on the sea,
Good sooth it was a mad delight ;
And every man of all the four
Shut his eyes and laughed outright.

Laughed as long as they had breath,
 Laughed while they had sense or breath ;
And close about us coiled a mist
Of gnats and midges, wasps and flies,
Like the whirlwind shaft it rist.

Drawn up I was right off my feet,
 Into the mist and off my feet ;
And, dancing on each chimney-top,
I saw a thousand darling imps
Keeping time with skip and hop.

And on the provost's brave ridge-tile,
 On the provost's grand ridge-tile,
The Blackamoor first to master me
I saw,—I saw that winsome smile,
The mouth that did my heart beguile,
And spoke the great Word over me,
In the land beyond the sea.

I called his name, I called aloud,
 Alas ! I called on him aloud ;
And then he filled his hand with stour,
And threw it towards me in the air ;
My mouse flew out, I lost my pow'r !

My lusty strength, my power, were gone ;
Power was gone, and all was gone.
He will not let me love him more !
Of bell and whip and horse's tail
He cares not if I find a store.

But I am proud if he is fierce !
I am as proud as he is fierce ;
I'll turn about and backward go,
If I meet again that Blackamoor,
And he'll help us then, for he shall know
I seek another paramour.

And we'll gang once more to yon town,
Wi' better luck to yon town ;
We'll walk in silk and cramoisie,
And I shall wed the provost's son ;
My-lady of the town I'll be !

For I was born a crowned king's child,
Born and nursed a king's child,
King o' a land ayont the sea,
Where the Blackamoor kissed me first,
And taught me art and glamourie.

Each one in her wame shall hide
Her hairy mouse, her wary mouse,
Fed on madwort and agramie,—
Wear amber beads between her breasts,
And blind-worm's skin about her knee.

The Lombard shall be Elspie's man,
Elspie's gowden husband-man ;
Nort shall take the lawyer's hand ;
The priest shall swear another vow :
We'll dance again the saraband !

LOVE'S CALENDAR.

THAT gusty spring, each afternoon
By the ivied cot I passed,
And noted at that lattice soon
Her fair face downward cast ;
Still in the same place seated there,
So diligent, so very fair.

Oft-times I said I knew her not,
Yet that way round would go,
Until, when evenings lengthened out,
And bloomed the may-hedge row,
I met her by the wayside well,
Whose waters, maybe, broke the spell.

For, leaning on her pail she prayed
I'd lift it to her head,
So did I ; but I'm much afraid
Some wasteful drops were shed,
And that we blushed, as face to face
Needs must we stand the shortest space.

Then when the sunset mellowed through
The ears of rustling grain,
When lattices wide open flew,
When ash-leaves fell like rain,
As well as I she knew the hour
At morn or eve I neared her bower.

And now that snow o'erlays the thatch,
Each starlit eve within
The door she waits, I raise the latch,
And kiss her lifted chin ;
Nor do I think we've blushed again,
For Love hath made but one of twain.

From "OUTSIDE THE TEMPLE."

I.

HOPE DEFERRED.

COURAGE of heart and hand, Faith first of all :
Such is the prayer of the perplexèd man,
As the storm-scattered blossoms round him fall,
And shrinking from the rod and from the ban
Of starless chance. Prayer prompted by desires
For mastery and godhead sense denies,
And by sky-pointing mediæval spires,
Symbols of creeds the beaten hound still tries
To shelter under in this pilgrimage,
Passing from birth to death. But let us hear

What Nature, cruel mother ! says so sage,—
Still listening if perchance gods interfere—
“Gain faith and courage through self-harmony,
And live your lives, nor only live to die.”

II.

CONTENTMENT IN THE DARK.

WE asked not to be born : 'tis not by will
That we are here beneath the battle-smoke,
Without escape ; by good things as by ill,
By facts and mysteries enchain'd : no cloak
Of an Elijah, no stairs whereupon
Angels ascending and descending shine
Over the head here pillowed on a stone,
Anywhere found ;—so say they who repine.
But each year hath its harvest, every hour
Some melody, child-laughter, strengthening strife,
For mother Earth still gives her child his dower,
And loves like doves sit on the boughs of life.

ONENESS OF ALL.

(PEBBLES IN THE STREAM.)

UPON this rustic bridge on this warm day
We rest from our too-thoughtful devious walk ;
Over our shadows its melodious talk
The stream continues, while oft-times a stray

Dry leaf drops down where these bright waters play
In endless eddies, through whose clear brown deep
The gorgeous pebbles quiver in their sleep ;
The stream still flows, but cannot flow away.

Could I but find the words that would reveal
The unity in multiplicity,
And the profound strange harmony I feel
With these dead things, God's garments of to-day ;
The listener's soul with mine they would anneal,
And make us one within eternity.

A SYMBOL.

AT early morn I watched, scarce consciously,
Through the half-opened casement the high screen
Of our trees touched now by the bright'ning sheen
Of the ascending sun : the room was grey
And dim, with old things filled this many a day,
Closing me in, but those thick folds of trees
Shone in the fresh light, trembled in the breeze :
A shadow crossed them on its arrowy way
Cast by a flying bird I could not see ;
Then called a voice far off that seemed to say,
Come, we are here ! Such might or might not be
What the voice called, but then methought I knew
I was a soul new-born in death's dark clay,
Awakening to another life more true.

From "PARTED LOVE."

I.

MORNING.

LAST night,—it must have been a ghost at best,—
I did believe the lost one's slumbering head
Filled the white hollows of the curtained bed,
And happily sank again to sound sweet rest,
As in times past with sleep my nightly guest,
A guest that left me only when the day
Showed me a fairer than Euphrosyne,—
Day that now shows me but the unfilled nest.

O night ! thou wert our mother at the first,
Thy silent chambers are our homes at last ;
And even now thou art our bath of life.
Come back ! the hot sun makes our lips athirst ;
Come back ! thy dreams may recreate the past ;
Come back ! and smooth again this heart's long strife.

II.

EVENING.

As in a glass at evening, dusky-grey,
The faces of those passing through the room
Seem like ghost-transits thwart reflected gloom,
Thus, darling image ! thou, so long away,
Visitest sometimes my darkening day :
Other friends come ; the toy of life turns round,
The glittering beads change with their tinkling sound,
Whilst thou in endless youth sit'st silently.

How vain to call time back, to think these arms
Again may touch, may shield, those shoulders soft
And solid, never more my eyes can see :
But yet, perchance—(*speak low*)—beyond all harms,
I may walk with thee in God's other croft,
When this world shall the darkling mirror be.

From "THE OLD SCOTCH HOUSE."

I.

THE BOWER.

IN the old house there is a chamber high,
Diapered with wind-scattered plane-tree leaves ;
And o'er one corbelled window that receives
The sunrise we've inscribed right daintily,
"Come, O fair Morn, fulfilling prophecy!"
Over another, western watch doth keep,
Is writ, "O Eve, bring thou the nursling Sleep!"
Adorning the old walls as best we may.

For up this bower-stair, in long-vanished years,
The bridegroom brought his bride and shut the door;
Here, too, closed weary eyes with kindred tears,
While mourners' feet were hushed upon the floor:
And still it seems these old trees and brown hills
Remember also our past joys and ills.

II.

A SPRING MORNING.

VAGUELY at dawn within the temperate clime
Of glimmering half-sleep, in this chamber high,
I heard the jackdaws in their loopholes nigh,
Fitfully stir : as yet it scarce was time
Of dawning, but the nestlings' hungry chime
Awoke me, and the old birds soon had flown ;
Then was a perfect lull, and I went down
Into deep slumber beneath dreams or rhyme.

But, suddenly renewed, the clamouring grows,
The callow beaklings clamouring every one,
The grey-heads had returned with worm and fly ;
I looked up and the room was like a rose,
Above the hill-top was the brave young sun,
The world was still as in an ecstasy.

III.

BELOW THE OLD HOUSE.

BENEATH those buttressed walls with lichens grey,
Beneath the slopes of trees whose flickering shade
Darkens the pools by dun green velvetted,
The stream leaps like a living thing at play,—
In haste it seems ; it cannot, cannot stay !
The great boughs changing there from year to year,
And the high jackdaw-haunted eaves, still hear
The burden of the rivulet—Passing away !

And some time certainly that oak no more
Will keep the winds in check ; his breadth of beam
Will go to rib some ship for some far shore ;
Those quoins and eaves will crumble, while that stream
Will still run whispering, whispering night and day,
That over-song of father Time—Passing away !

ON THE INSCRIPTION, KEATS' TOMBSTONE.

(ENGLISH CEMETERY, ROME.)

From "SONNETS ON LITERARY SUBJECTS."

COULD we but see the Future ere it comes,
As gods must see effects in causes hid,—
How calmly could we wait till we were bid !
Heroes would hear their triumph's far-off drums,
Would see Fame's splendours ere the threads and
thrums
Had formed them in to-morrow's living loom ;
Would feel the honours round the future tomb,
Across the sunless fosse where life succumbs.

If it were so ! But wiser fates conspire
That each shall bear his own lamp through the
night,
Showing but short way round its blood-red light,
And find, by it alone, the herb that springs
Fast by the wells of fathomless desire ;
And of this healing herb the poet sings.

THE EPITAPH OF HUBERT VAN EYCK.

(CARVED ON THE SHIELD HELD BY A MARBLE SKELETON,
CATHEDRAL OF ST. BAVON, GHENT.)

WHOE'ER thou art who walkest overhead,
Behold thyself in stone : for I yestreen
Was seemly and alert like thee : now dead,
Nailed up and earthed, and for the last time green,
(The first spring greenness and the last decay,)
Am hidden here for ever from the day.
I, Hubert Van Eyck, whom all Bruges hailed
Worthy of lauds, am now with worms engrailed.¹
My soul with many pangs by God constrained
Fled in September when the corn is wained,
Just fourteen hundred years and twenty-six
Since Christ Himself was our first crucifix.
Lovers of Art, pray for me that I gain
God's grace, nor find I've worked and lived in vain.

SANDRART'S INSCRIPTION,

ON ALBERT DÜRER'S GRAVE, NÜRNBERG.

REST here, thou Prince of Painters, thou who wast better
than great,
In many arts unequalled in the old time or the late.
Earth thou didst paint and garnish, and now, in thy new
abode,
Thou paintest the holy things overhead in the city of God.
And we, as our patron saint, look up to thee ever will,
And crown, with a laurel crown, the dust left here with
us still.

¹ Spotted, pitted.

JAMES THOMSON ("B. V").

From "THE CITY OF DREADFUL NIGHT."

I.

THE City is of Night ; perchance of Death,
But certainly of Night ; for never there
Can come the lucid morning's fragrant breath
After the dewy dawning's cold grey air ;
The moon and stars may shine with scorn or pity ;
The sun has never visited that city,
For it dissolveth in the daylight fair.

A river girds the city west and south,
The main north channel of a broad lagoon,
Regurging with the salt tides from the mouth ;
Waste marshes shine and glister to the moon
For leagues, then moorland black, then stony ridges ;
Great piers and causeways, many noble bridges,
Connect the town and islet suburbs strewn.

Upon an easy slope it lies at large,
And scarcely overlaps the long curved crest
Which swells out two leagues from the river marge.
A trackless wilderness rolls north and west,
Savannahs, savage woods, enormous mountains,
Bleak uplands, black ravines with torrent fountains ;
And eastward rolls the shipless sea's unrest.

The city is not ruinous, although
Great ruins of an unremembered past,
With others of a few short years ago
More sad, are found within its precincts vast.
The street-lamps always burn ; but scarce a casement
In house or palace front from roof to basement
Doth glow or gleam athwart the mirk air cast.

The street-lamps burn amidst the baleful glooms,
Amidst the soundless solitudes immense
Of ranged mansions dark and still as tombs.
The silence which benumbs or strains the sense
Fulfil with awe the soul's despair unweeping :
Myriads of habitants are ever sleeping,
Or dead, or fled from nameless pestilence !

Yet as in some necropolis you find
Perchance one mourner to a thousand dead,
So there ; worn faces that look deaf and blind
Like tragic masks of stone. With weary tread,
Each wrapt in his own doom, they wander, wander,
Or sit foredone and desolately ponder
Through sleepless hours with heavy drooping head.

Mature men chiefly, few in age or youth,
A woman rarely, now and then a child :
A child ! If here the heart turns sick with ruth
To see a little one from birth defiled,
Or lame or blind, as preordained to languish
Through youthless life, think how it bleeds with anguish
To meet one erring in that homeless wild.

They often murmur to themselves, they speak
To one another seldom, for their woe
Broods maddening inwardly and scorns to wreak
Itself abroad ; and if at whiles it grow
To frenzy which must rave, none heeds the clamour,
Unless there waits some victim of like glamour,
To rave in turn, who lends attentive show.

The City is of Night, but not of Sleep ;
There sweet sleep is not for the weary brain ;
The pitiless hours like years and ages creep,
A night seems termless hell. . . .

II.

It is full strange to him who hears and feels,
When wandering there in some deserted street,
The booming and the jar of ponderous wheels,
The trampling clash of heavy ironshod feet :
Who in this Venice of the Black Sea rideth ?
Who in this city of the stars abideth
To buy or sell as those in daylight sweet ?

The rolling thunder seems to fill the sky
As it comes on ; the horses snort and strain,
The harness jingles, as it passes by ;
The hugeness of an overburthened wain :
A man sits nodding on the shaft or trudges
Three parts asleep beside his fellow-drudges :
And so it rolls into the night again.

What merchandise? whence, whither, and for whom?
Perchance it is a Fate-appointed hearse,
Bearing away to some mysterious tomb
Or Limbo of the scornful universe
The joy, the peace, the life-hope, the abortions
Of all things good which should have been our portions,
But have been strangled by that City's curse.

III.

Because he seemed to walk with an intent
I followed him; who, shadowlike and frail,
Unswervingly though slowly onward went,
Regardless, wrapt in thought as in a veil:
Thus step for step with lonely sounding feet
We travelled many a long dim silent street.

At length he paused: a black mass in the gloom,
A tower that merged into the heavy sky;
Around, the huddled stones of grave and tomb:
Some old God's-acre now corruption's sty:
He murmured to himself with dull despair,
Here Faith died, poisoned by this charnel air.

Then turning to the right went on once more,
And travelled weary roads without suspense;
And reached at last a low wall's open door,
Whose villa gleamed beyond the foliage dense:
He gazed, and muttered with a hard despair,
Here Love died, stabbed by its own worshipped pair.

Then turning to the right resumed his march,
And travelled streets and lanes with wondrous strength,
Until on stooping through a narrow arch
We stood before a squalid house at length ;
He gazed, and whispered with a cold despair,
Here Hope died, starved out in its utmost lair. . . .

IV.

The mansion stood apart in its own ground ;
In front thereof a fragrant garden-lawn,
High trees about it, and the whole walled round :
The massy iron gates were both withdrawn ;
And every window of its front shed light,
Portentous in that City of the Night.

But though thus lighted it was deadly still
As all the countless bulks of solid gloom :
Perchance a congregation to fulfil
Solemnities of silence in this doom,
Mysterious rites of dolour and despair
Permitting not a breath of chant or prayer ?

Broad steps ascended to a terrace broad
Whereon lay still light from the open door ;
The hall was noble, and its aspect awed,
Hung round with heavy black from dome to floor ;
And ample stairways rose to left and right
Whose balustrades were also draped with night.

I paced from room to room, from hall to hall,
Nor any life throughout the maze discerned ;
But each was hung with its funereal pall,
And held a shrine, around which tapers burned,
With picture or with statue or with bust,
All copied from the same fair form of dust :

A woman very young and very fair ;
Beloved by bounteous life and joy and youth,
And loving these sweet lovers, so that care
And age and death seemed not for her in sooth :
Alike as stars, all beautiful and bright,
These shapes lit up that mausoléan night.

At length I heard a murmur as of lips,
And reached an open oratory hung
With heaviest blackness of the whole eclipse ;
Beneath the dome a fuming censer swung ;
And one lay there upon a low white bed,
With tapers burning at the foot and head :

The Lady of the images : supine,
Deathstill, lifesweet, with folded palms she lay :
And kneeling there as at a sacred shrine
A young man wan and worn who seemed to pray :
A crucifix of dim and ghostly white
Surmounted the large altar left in night :—

The chambers of the mansion of my heart,
In every one whereof thine image dwells,
Are black with grief eternal for thy sake.

The inmost oratory of my soul,
Wherein thou ever dwellest quick or dead,
Is black with grief eternal for thy sake.

I kneel beside thee and I clasp the cross,
With eyes for ever fixed upon that face,
So beautiful and dreadful in its calm.

I kneel here patient as thou liest there ;
As patient as a statue carved in stone,
Of adoration and eternal grief.

While thou dost not awake I cannot move ;
And something tells me thou wilt never wake,
And I alive feel turning into stone.

Most beautiful were Death to end my grief,
Most hateful to destroy the sight of thee,
Dear vision better than all death or life.

But I renounce all choice of life or death,
For either shall be ever at thy side,
And thus in bliss or woe be ever well.—

He murmured thus and thus in monotone,
Intent upon that uncorrupted face,
Entranced except his moving lips alone :
I glided with hushed footsteps from the place.
This was the festival that filled with light
That palace in the City of the Night.

v.

I sat me weary on a pillar's base,
And leaned against the shaft ; for broad moonlight
O'erflowed the peacefulness of cloistered space,
A shore of shadow slanting from the right :
The great cathedral's western front stood there,
A wave-worn rock in that calm sea of air.

Before it, opposite my place of rest,
Two figures faced each other, large, austere ;
A couchant sphinx in shadow to the breast,
An angel standing in the moonlight clear ;
So mighty by magnificence of form,
They were not dwarfed beneath that mass enorm.

Upon the cross-hilt of a naked sword
The angel's hands, as prompt to smite, were held ;
His vigilant, intense regard was poured
Upon the creature placidly unquelled,
Whose front was set at level gaze which took
No heed of aught, a solemn trance-like look.

And as I pondered these opposed shapes
My eyelids sank in stupor, that dull swoon
Which drugs and with a leaden mantle drapes
The outworn to worse weariness. But soon
A sharp and clashing noise the stillness broke,
And from the evil lethargy I woke.

The angel's wings had fallen, stone on stone,
And lay there shattered ; hence the sudden sound :
A warrior leaning on his sword alone
Now watched the sphinx with that regard profound ;
The sphinx unchanged looked forthright, as aware
Of nothing in the vast abyss of air.

Again I sank in that repose unsweet,
Again a clashing noise my slumber rent ;
The warrior's sword lay broken at his feet :
An unarmed man with raised hands impotent
Now stood before the sphinx, which ever kept
Such mien as if with open eyes it slept.

My eyelids sank in spite of wonder grown ;
A louder crash upstartled me in dread :
The man had fallen forward, stone on stone,
And lay there shattered, with his trunkless head
Between the monster's large quiescent paws,
Between its grand front changeless as life's laws.

The moon had circled westward full and bright,
And made the temple-front a mystic dream,
And bathed the whole enclosure with its light,
The sworded angel's wrecks, the sphinx supreme :
I pondered long that cold majestic face
Whose vision seemed of infinite void space.

VI.

Anear the centre of that northern crest
Stands out a level upland bleak and bare,
From which the city east and south and west
Sinks gently in long waves ; and thronèd there
An Image sits, stupendous, superhuman,
The bronze colossus of a winged Woman,
Upon a graded granite base foursquare.

Low-seated she leans forward massively,
With cheek on clenched left hand, the forearm's might
Erect, its elbow on her rounded knee ;
Across a clasped book in her lap the right
Upholds a pair of compasses ; she gazes
With full set eyes, but wandering in thick mazes
Of sombre thought beholds no outward sight.

Words cannot picture her ; but all men know
That solemn sketch the pure sad artist wrought
Three centuries and threescore years ago,
With phantasies of his peculiar thought :
The instruments of carpentry and science
Scattered about her feet, in strange alliance
With the keen wolf-hound sleeping undistraught ;

Scales, hour-glass, bell, and magic-square above ;
The grave and solid infant perched beside,
With open winglets that might bear a dove,
Intent upon its tablets, heavy-eyed ;
Her folded wings as of a mighty eagle,
But all too impotent to lift the regal
Robustness of her earth-born strength and pride ;

And with those wings, and that light wreath which seems
To mock her grand head and the knotted frown
Of forehead charged with baleful thoughts and dreams,
The household bunch of keys, the housewife's gown
Voluminous, indented, and yet rigid
As if a shell of burnished metal frigid,
The feet thick-shod to tread all weakness down ;

The comet hanging o'er the waste dark seas,
The massy rainbow curved in front of it
Beyond the village with the masts and trees ;
The snaky imp, dog-headed, from the Pit,
Bearing upon its batlike leathern pinions
Her name unfolded in the sun's dominions,
The "MELENCOLIA" that transcends all wit.

Thus has the artist copied her, and thus
Surrounded to expound her form sublime,
Her fate heroic and calamitous ;
Fronting the dreadful mysteries of Time,
Unvanquished in defeat and desolation,
Undaunted in the hopeless conflagration
Of the day setting on her baffled prime.

Baffled and beaten back she works on still,
Weary and sick of soul she works the more,
Sustained by her indomitable will :
The hands shall fashion and the brain shall pore,
And all her sorrow shall be turned to labour,
Till Death the friend-foe piercing with his sabre
That mighty heart of hearts ends bitter war.

But as if blacker night could dawn on night,
With tenfold gloom on moonless night unstarred,
A sense more tragic than defeat and blight,
More desperate than strife with hope debarred,
More fatal than the adamantine Never
Encompassing her passionate endeavour,
Dawns glooming in her tenebrous regard :

The sense that every struggle brings defeat
Because Fate holds no prize to crown success ;
That all the oracles are dumb or cheat
Because they have no secret to express ;
That none can pierce the vast black veil uncertain
Because there is no light beyond the curtain ;
That all is vanity and nothingness.

Titanic from her high throne in the north,
That City's sombre Patroness and Queen,
In bronze sublimity she gazes forth
Over her Capital of teen and threne,
Over the river with its isles and bridges,
The marsh and moorland, to the stern rock-ridges,
Confronting them with a coëval mien.

The moving moon and stars from east to west
Circle before her in the sea of air ;
Shadows and gleams glide round her solemn rest.
Her subjects often gaze up to her there :
The strong to drink new strength of iron endurance,
The weak new terrors ; all, renewed assurance
And confirmation of the old despair.

PROFESSOR BLACKIE.

THE DEATH OF COLUMBA.

From "LAYS OF THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS."

SAXON stranger, thou did'st wisely,
 Sunder'd for a little space
 From that motley stream of people
 Drifting by this holy place ;
 With the furnace and the funnel
 Through the long sea's glancing arm,
 Let them hurry back to Oban,
 Where the tourist loves to swarm.
 Here, upon this hump of granite,
 Sit with me a quiet while,
 And I'll tell thee how Columba
 Died upon this old grey isle.

I.

'Twas in May, a breezy morning,
 When the sky was fresh and bright,
 And the broad blue ocean shimmer'd
 With a thousand gems of light.
 On the green and grassy Machar,
 Where the fields are spreaden wide,

And the crags in quaint confusion
Jut into the Western tide :
Here his troop of godly people,
In stout labour's garb array'd,
Blithe their fruitful task were plying
With the hoe and with the spade.
"I will go and bless my people,"
Quoth the father, "ere I die,
But the strength is slow to follow
Where the wish is swift to fly ;
I am old and feeble, Diarmid,
Yoke the oxen, be not slow,
I will go and bless my people,
Ere from earth my spirit go."
On his ox-drawn wain he mounted,
Faithful Diarmid by his side ;
Soon they reach'd the grassy Machar,
Soft and smooth, Iona's pride :
"I am come to bless my people,
Faithful fraters, ere I die ;
I had wish'd to die at Easter,
But I would not mar your joy,
Now the Master plainly calls me,
Gladly I obey his call ;
I am ripe, I feel the sickle,
Take my blessing, ere I fall."
But they heard his words with weeping,
And their tears fell on the dew,
And their eyes were dimmed with sorrow,
For they knew his words were true.
Then he stood up on the waggon,
And his prayerful hands he hove,
And he spake and bless'd the people
With the blessing of his love :
"God be with you, faithful fraters,

With you now, and evermore ;
 Keep you from the touch of evil,
 On your souls his Spirit pour ;
 God be with you, fellow workmen,
 And from loved Iona's shore
 Keep the blighting breath of demons,
 Keep the viper's venom'd store !"
 Thus he spake, and turn'd the oxen
 Townwards ; sad they went, and slow,
 And the people, fix'd in sorrow,
 Stood, and saw the father go.

II.

List me further, Saxon stranger,
 Note it nicely, by the causeway
 On the left hand, where thou came
 With the motley tourist people,
 Stands a cross of figured fame.
 Even now thine eye may see it,
 Near the nunnery, slim and grey ;—
 From the waggon there Columba
 Lighted on that tearful day,
 And he sat beneath the shadow
 Of that cross, upon a stone,
 Brooding on his speedy passage
 To the land where grief is none ;
 When, behold, the mare, the white one
 That was wont the milk to bear
 From the dairy to the cloister,
 Stood before him meekly there,
 Stood, and softly came up to him,
 And with move of gentlest grace
 O'er the shoulder of Columba
 Thrust her piteous-pleading face,

Look'd upon him as a friend looks
On a friend that goes away,
Sunder'd from the land that loves him
By wide seas of briny spray :
“ Fie upon thee for thy manners ! ”
Diarmid cried with lifted rod,
“ Wilt thou with untimely fondness
Vex the prayerful man of God ? ”
“ Not so, Diarmid, ” cried Columba ;
“ Dost thou see the speechful eyne
Of the fond and faithful creature
Sorrow'd with the swelling brine ?
God hath taught the mute unreasoning
What thou fail'st to understand,
That this day I pass for ever .
From Iona's shelly strand.
Have my blessing, gentle creature,
God doth bless both man and beast ;
From hard yoke, when I shall leave thee,
Be thy faithful neck released. ”
Thus he spoke, and quickly rising
With what feeble strength remain'd,
Leaning on stout Diarmid's shoulder,
A green hillock's top he gained.
There, or here where we are sitting,
Whence his eye might measure well
Both the cloister and the chapel,
And his pure and prayerful cell,—
There he stood, and high uplifting
Hands whence flowed a healing grace,
Breathed his latest voice of blessing
To protect the sacred place,—
Spake such words as prophets utter
When the veil of flesh is rent,
And the present fades from vision,

On the germinating future bent :
 "God thee bless, thou loved Iona,
 Though thou art a little spot,
 Though thy rocks are grey and treeless,
 Thine shall be a boastful lot ;
 Thou shalt be a sign for nations ;
 Nurtured on thy sacred breast,
 Thou shalt send on holy mission
 Men to teach both East and West ;
 Peers and potentates shall own thee,
 Monarchs of wide-sceptre'd sway
 Dying shall beseech the honour
 To be tomb'd beneath thy clay ;
 God's dear saints shall love to name thee,
 And from many a storied land
 Men of clerkly fame shall pilgrim
 To Iona's little strand."

III.

Thus the old man spake his blessing ;
 Then, where most he loved to dwell,
 Through the well-known porch he enter'd
 To his pure and prayerful cell ;
 And then took the holy psalter—
 'Twas his wont when he would pray—
 Bound with three stout clasps of silver,
 From the casket where it lay ;
 There he read with fixed devoutness,
 And with craft full fair and fine,
 On the smooth and polish'd vellum
 Copied forth the sacred line,
 Till he came to where the kingly
 Singer sings in faithful mood,

How the younglings of the lion
Oft may roam in vain for food,
But who fear the Lord shall never
Live and lack their proper good.¹
Here he stopped, and said, "My latest
Now is written ; what remains
I bequeath to faithful Beathan
To complete with pious pains."
Then he rose, and in the chapel
Conned the pious vesper song
Inly to himself, for feeble
Now the voice that once was strong ;
Hence with silent step returning
To his pure and prayerful cell,
On the round smooth stone he laid him
Which for pallet served him well.
Here some while he lay ; then rising,
To a trusty brother said :
"Brother, take my parting message,
Be my last words wisely weigh'd.
'Tis an age of brawl and battle ;
Men who seek not God to please,
With wild sweep of lawless passion
Waste the land and scourge the seas.
Not like them be ye ; be loving,
Peaceful, patient, truthful, bold,
But in service of your Master
Use no steel and seek no gold."
Thus he spake ; but now there sounded
Through the night the holy bell
That to Lord's Day matins gather'd
Every monk from every cell.
Eager at the sound, Columba

¹ Psalm xxxiv. 10.

In the way foresped the rest,
 And before the altar kneeling,
 Pray'd with hands on holy breast.
 Diarmid followed ; but a marvel
 Flow'd upon his wondering eyne,—
 All the windows shone with glorious
 Light of angels in the shrine.
 Diarmid enter'd ; all was darkness.
 "Father !" But no answer came.
 "Father ! art thou here, Columba ?"
 Nothing answer'd to the name.
 Soon the troop of monks came hurrying,
 Each man with a wandering light,
 For great fear had come upon them,
 And a sense of strange affright.
 "Diarmid ! Diarmid ! is the father
 With thee ? Art thou here alone ?"
 And they turn'd their lights and found him
 On the pavement lying prone.
 And with gentle hands they raised him,
 And he mildly look'd around,
 And he raised his arm to bless them,
 But it dropped upon the ground ;
 And his breathless body rested
 On the arms that held him dear,
 And his dead face look'd upon them
 With a light serene and clear ;
 And they said that holy angels
 Surely hover'd round his head,
 For alive no loveliest ever
 Look'd so lovely as this dead.

Stranger, thou hast heard my story,
 Thank thee for thy patient ear ;

We are pleased to stir the sleeping
 Memory of old greatness here.
 I have used no gloss, no varnish,
 To make fair things fairer look ;
 As the record stands, I give it,
 In the old monk's Latin book.
 Keep it in thy heart, and love it,
 Where a good thing loves to dwell ;
 It may help thee in thy dying,
 If thou care to use it well.

THE SONG OF MRS. JENNY GEDDES.

(TUNE—*British Grenadiers.*)

SOME praise the fair Queen Mary, and some the good
 Queen Bess,
 And some the wise Aspasia, beloved by Pericles ;
 But o'er all the world's brave women, there's one that
 bears the rule,
 The valiant Jenny Geddes, that flung the three-legged
 stool.

With a row-dow—at them now!—Jenny fling the stool!

'Twas the twenty-third of July, in the sixteen thirty-
 seven,
 On Sabbath morn from high St. Giles' the solemn peal
 was given :

King Charles had sworn that Scottish men should pray
 by printed rule ;

He sent a book, but never dreamt of danger from a stool.
With a row-dow—yes, I trow!—there's danger in a stool!

The Council and the Judges, with ermined pomp elate,
The Provost and the Bailies in gold and crimson state,
Fair silken-vested ladies, grave Doctors of the school,
Were there to please the King, and learn the virtue of a
stool.

With a row-dow—yes, I trow!—there's virtue in a stool!

The Bishop and the Dean came in wi' mickle gravity,
Right smooth and sleek, but lordly pride was lurking in
their e'e;
Their full lawn sleeves were blown and big, like seals in
briny pool;
They bore a book, but little thought they soon should
feel a stool.

*With a row-dow—yes, I trow!—they'll feel a three-legged
stool!*

The Dean he to the altar went, and, with a solemn look,
He cast his eyes to heaven, and read the curious-printed
book:

In Jenny's heart the blood upwelled with bitter anguish
full;
Sudden she started to her legs, and stoutly grasped the
stool!

With a row-dow—at them now! firmly grasp the stool!

As when a mountain wild-cat springs on a rabbit small,
So Jenny on the Dean springs, with gush of holy gall;
*Wilt thou say the mass at my lug, thou Popish-puling
fool?*

No ! no ! she said, and at his head she flung the three-legged stool.

With a row-dow—at them now!—Jenny fling the stool!

A bump, a thump ! a smash, a crash ! now gentle folks beware !

Stool after stool, like rattling hail, came tirling through the air,

With, Well done, Jenny ! bravo, Jenny ! that's the proper tool !

When the Deil will out, and shows his snout, just meet him with a stool !

With a row-dow—at them now!—there's nothing like a stool!

The Council and the Judges were smitten with strange fear,

The ladies and the Bailies their seats did deftly clear,

The Bishop and the Dean went, in sorrow and in dool,

And all the Popish flummery fled, when Jenny showed the stool !

With a row-dow—at them now! Jenny show the stool!

And thus a mighty deed was done by Jenny's valiant hand,

Black Prelacy and Popery she drave from Scottish land ;

King Charles he was a shuffling knave, priest Laud a meddling fool,

But Jenny was a woman wise, who beat them with a stool !

With a row-dow—yes, I trow!—she conquered by the stool!

THE WORKING MAN'S SONG.

I AM no gentleman, not I !
No bowing, scraping thing !
I bear my head more free and high
Than titled count or king.
I am no gentleman, not I !
No, no, no !
And only to one Lord on high
My head I bow.

I am no gentleman, not I !
No vain and varnished thing !
And from my heart without a die,
My honest thoughts I fling.
I am no gentleman, not I !
No, no, no !
Our stout John Knox was none—and why
Should I be so ?

I am no gentleman, not I !
No mincing, modish thing !
In gay saloon a butterfly,
Some wax-doll Miss to wing.
I am no gentleman, not I !
No, no, no !
No moth, to sport in fashion's eye,
A Bond Street beau !

I am no gentleman, not I !
No bully, braggart thing !
With jockeys on the course to vie,
With bull-dogs in the ring.
I am no gentleman, not I !
No, no, no !
The working man might sooner die
Than sink so low !

I am no gentleman, not I !
No star-bedizened thing !
My fathers filched no dignity,
By fawning to a king.
I am no gentleman, not I !
No, no, no !
And to the wage of honesty
My rank I owe !

I am no gentleman, not I !
No bowing, scraping thing !
I bear my head more free and high
Than titled count or king.
I am no gentleman, not I !
No, no, no !
And thank the blessed God on high,
Who made me so !

A SONG OF GEOLOGY.

From "MUSA BURSCHICOSA."

I'LL sing you a ditty that needs no apology—
 Attend, and keep watch in the gates of your ears !—
 Of the famous new science which men call Geology,
 And gods call the story of millions of years.
 Millions, millions—did I say millions ?
 Billions and trillions are more like the fact !
 Millions, billions, trillions, quadrillions,
 Make the long sum of creation exact !

Confusion and Chaos, with wavering pinion,
 First swayed o'er the weltering ferment of things,
 When all over all held alternate dominion,
 And the slaves of to-day were to-morrow the kings.
 Chaos, Chaos, infinite wonder !
 Wheeling and reeling on wavering wings ;
 Whence issued the world, which some think a
 blunder,
 A rumble and tumble and jumble of things !

The minim of being, the dot of creation,
 The germ of Sire Adam, of you and of me,
 In the folds of the gneiss in Laurentian station,
 Far west from the roots of Cape Wrath you may see.
 Minims of being, budding and bursting,
 All on the floor of the measureless sea !
 Small, but for mighty development thirsting,
 With throbs of the future, like you, Sir, and me !

The waters, now big with a novel sensation,
Brought corals and buckies and bivalves to view,
Who dwell in shell houses, a soft-bodied nation ;
But fishes with fins were yet none in the blue.
Buckies and bivalves, a numberless nation !
Buckies, and bivalves, and trilobites too !
These you will find in Silurian station,
When Ramsay and Murchison sharpen your view.

Then fins were invented ; when Queen Amphitrite
Stirred up her force from Devonian beds,
The race of the fishes in ocean grew mighty,
Queer-looking fishes with bucklers for heads.
Fishes, fishes—small greedy fishes !
With wings on their shoulders and horns on their
heads,
With scales bright and shiny, that shoot through the
briny
Cerulean halls on Devonian beds !

God bless the fishes !—but now on the dry land,
In days when the sun shone benign on the poles,
Forests of ferns in the low and the high land
Spread their huge fans, soon to change into coals !
Forests of ferns—a wonderful verity !
Rising like palm-trees beneath the North Pole ;
And all to prepare for the golden prosperity
Of John Bull reposing on iron and coal.

Now Nature the eye of the gazer entrances
With wonder on wonder from teeming abodes ;
From the gills of the fish to true lungs she advances,
And bursts into blossoms of tadpoles and toads.

Strange Batrachian people, Triassic all,
 Like hippopotamus huge on the roads !
 You may call them ungainly, uncouth, and un-
 classical,
 But great in the reign of the Trias were Toads !

Behold, a strange monster our wonder engages,
 If dolphin or lizard your wit may defy,
 Some thirty feet long on the shore of Lyme-Regis,
 With a saw for a jaw, and a big staring eye.
 A fish or a lizard ? an ichthyosaurus,
 With a big goggle eye, and a very small brain,
 And paddles like mill-wheels in clattering chorus,
 Smiting tremendous the dread-sounding main !

And here comes another ! can shape more absurd be,
 The strangest and oddest of vertebrate things ?
 Who knows if this creature a beast or a bird be,
 A fowl without feathers, a serpent with wings ?
 A beast or a bird—an equivocal monster !
 A crow or a crocodile, who can declare ?
 A greedy, voracious, long-necked monster,
 Skimming the billow, and ploughing the air.

Next rises to view the great four-footed nation,
 Hyenas and tapirs, a singular race,
 You may pick up their wreck from the great Paris basin,
 At the word of command every bone finds its place.
 Palæothere, very singular creature !
 A horse or a tapir, or both can you say ?
 Showing his grave pachydermatous feature,
 Just where the Frenchman now sips his café.

And now the life-temple grows vaster and vaster,
Only the pediment fails to the plan ;
The winged and the wingless are waiting their master,
The Mammoth is howling a welcome to Man.
Mammoth, Mammoth ! mighty old Mammoth !
Strike with your hatchet and cut a good slice ;
The bones you will find, and the hide of the
mammoth,
Packed in stiff cakes of Siberian ice.

At last the great biped, the crown of the mammals,
Sire Adam, majestic, comes treading the sod,
A measureless animal, free without trammels
To swing all the space from an ape to a god.
Wonderful biped, erect and featherless !
Sport of two destinies, treading the sod,
With the perilous licence, unbridled and tetherless,
To sink to a devil or rise to a god.

And thus was completed—miraculous wonder !
The world, this mighty mysterious thing ;
I believe it is more than a beautiful blunder,
And worship, and pray, and adore, while I sing.
Wonder and miracle !—God made the wonder ;
Come, happy creatures, and worship with me !
I know it is more than a beautiful blunder,
And I hope Tait, and Tyndall, and Huxley agree.

THE SONG OF THE HIGHLAND RIVER.

DEW-FED am I
 With drops from the sky,
 Where the white cloud rests on the old grey hill ;
 Slowly I creep
 Down the precipice steep,
 Where the snow through the summer lies freezingly still ;
 Where the wreck of the storm
 Lies shattered enorm,
 I steal 'neath the stone with a tremulous rill ;
 My low-trickling flow
 You may hear, as I go
 Down the sharp-furrowed brow of the old grey hill,
 Or drink from my well,
 Grass-grown where I dwell,
 In the clear granite cell of the old grey hill.

In the hollow of the hill
 With my waters I fill
 The little black tarn where the thin mist floats ;
 The deep old moss
 Slow-oozing I cross,
 When the lapwing cries with its long shrill notes ;
 Then fiercely I rush to the sharp granite edge,
 And leap with a bound o'er the old grey ledge ;
 Like snow in the gale,
 I drive down the vale,
 Lashing the rock with my foamy flail ;
 Where the black crags frown,
 I pour sheer down,

Into the caldron boiling and brown ;
Whirling and eddying there I lie,
Where the old hawk wheels, and the blast howls by.

From the treeless brae
All green and grey,
To the wooded ravine I wind my way,
Dashing, and foaming, and leaping with glee,
The child of the mountain wild and free.
Under the crag where the stone-crop grows,
Fringing with gold my shelvy bed,
Where over my head
Its fruitage of red,
The rock-rooted rowan tree blushfully shows,
I wind, till I find
A way to my mind,
While hazel, and oak, and the light ash tree,
Weave a green awning of leafage for me.
Fitfully, fitfully, on I go,
Leaping, or running, or winding slow,
Till I come to the linn where my waters rush,
Eagerly down with a broad-faced gush,
Foamingly, foamingly, white as the snow,
On to the soft green turf below ;
Where I sleep with the lake as it sleeps in the glen,
'Neath the far-stretching base of the high-peaked Ben.

Slowly and smoothly my winding I make,
Round the dark-wooded islets that stud the clear lake;
The green hills sleep
With their beauty in me,
Their shadows the light clouds
Fling as they flee,

While in my pure waters pictured I glass
The light-plumed birches that nod as I pass.
 Slowly and silently on I wend,
 With many a bay and many a bend,
Luminous seen like a silvery line,
Shimmering bright in the fair sunshine,
Till I come to the pass, where the steep red scaur
Gleams like a watch-fire seen from afar,
 Then out I ride,
 With a full-rolling pride,
While my floods like the amber shine ;
 Where the salmon rejoice
 To hear my voice,
And the angler trims his line.

Gentlier now, with a kindly slope,
The green hills lie to the bright blue cope,
And wider the patches of green are spread,
Which Time hath won from my shifting bed.
 And many a broad and sunny spot,
 Where my waters wend,
 With a larger bend,
Shows the white-fronted brown-thatched cot,
Where the labouring man with sweatful care,
Hath trimmed him a garden green and fair,
 From the wreck of the granite bare.

And many a hamlet, peopled well
With hard-faced workmen, smokes from the dell ;
 Cunning to work with axe and hammer,
 Cunning to shear the fleecy flock,

Cunning, with blast and nitrous clamour,
To split the useful rock.
And many a rural church far-seen
Stands on the knolls of grassy green,
Where my swirling current flows ;
And, with its spire high-pointed, shows
How man, that treads the earthy sod,
Claims fatherhood from God.

Now broader and broader my rich bed grows,
And deeper and deeper my full tide flows ;
And, while onward I sail,
Like a ship to the gale,
With my big flood rolling amain,
The glen spreads out to a leafy vale,
And the vale spreads out to a plain.
And many a princely mansion good
Looks from the old thick-tufted wood,
On my clear far-winding line.
And many a farm, with acres spread,
Slopes gently to my fattening bed,
The farm, whose broad and portly lord
Loads with rich fare the liberal board,
And quaffs the ruby wine.
And richly, richly, round and round,
With green and golden pride, the ground
Swells undulant, gardened o'er and o'er
With beauty's bloom, and plenty's store ;
And many a sheaf of yellow corn,
The farmer's healthful gain,
Up my soft-shaded banks is borne,
On the huge slow-labouring wain.

And many a yard well stacked with hay,
 And many a dairy's trim array,
 And many a high-piled barn I see,
 And many a dance of rustic glee,
 Where sweats the jocund swain.
 And many a town thick-sown with steeples
 With various wealth my border peoples,
 And studs my sweeping line ;
 While frequent the bridge of well-hewn stone,
 Arch after arch, is proudly thrown,
 My busy banks to join ;
 Thus through the plain I wend my fruitful way,
 To meet the sounding sea, and swell the briny bay.

 The briny bay ! how fair it lies
 Beneath the azure skies !
 With its wide sweep of pebbly shore,
 And the low far-murmuring roar
 Of wave and wavelet sparkling bright
 With a thousand points in the dancing light.
 There round the promontory's base,
 Bluff bulwark of the bay,
 Free ranging with a lordly grace,
 I wind my surging way,
 To mingle with the main. Where wide
 This way and that my turbid tide
 Is spread, behold in pennoned pride
 Strong Neptune's white-winged couriers ride !
 From east to west,
 Upon my breast,
 Rich bales they bear, to swell the stores
 Of merchant kings, who on my shores
 Pile their proud palaces. Busily plying,

And with fleet wings in fleetness vying,
The fire-fed steam-consuming boat
Casts from its high-reared iron throat,
The many-volumed smoke, while heaves
Beneath the boiling track it leaves
My furrowed flood. Line upon line,
The ships that crossed the fretful brine,
Far-stretching o'er my spacious strand,
A myriad-masted army stand ;
While many a pier, and many a mole,
Breaks my strong current as I roll ;
And block and bolt, and bar and chain,
With giant-gates my flood detain,
To serve the seaman's need. Around,
Thick as a forest, from the ground
Street upon street, the city rears
Its pride, in strangely-clambering tiers
Of various-fashioned stone, while domes,
And spires, and pinnacles, and towers,
And wealthy tradesmen's terraced bowers
Nod o'er my troubled bed,
And Labour's many-chambered homes,
In straggling vastness, spread
Their smoking lines. Thus, where I flow,
The stream of being, growing as I grow,
Floods to a tumult, and much-labouring man,
Who, with my small beginnings, small began,
Ends where I end, and crowns his swelling plan.

CHINESE GORDON.

SOME men live near to God, as my right arm
Is near to me; and thus they walk about
Mailed in full proof of faith, and bear a charm
That mocks at fear, and bars the door on doubt,
And dares the impossible. So Gordon, thou,
Through the hot stir of this distracted time,
Dost hold thy course, a flaming witness how
To do and dare, and make our lives sublime
As God's campaigners. What live we for but this,
Into the sour to breathe the soul of sweetness,
The stunted growth to rear to fair completeness,
Drown sneers in smiles, kill hatred with a kiss,
And to the sandy waste bequeath the fame
That the grass grew behind us where we came!

DR. GEORGE MACDONALD.

I WOULD I WERE A CHILD.

From "ORGAN SONGS."

I WOULD I were a child,
That I might look, and laugh, and say, My Father !
And follow thee with running feet, or rather
Be led through dark and wild !

How I would hold thy hand,
My glad eyes often to thy glory lifting !
Should darkness 'twixt thy face and mine come drifting,
My heart would but expand.

If an ill thing came near,
I would but creep within thy mantle's folding,
Shut my eyes close, thy hand yet faster holding,
And soon forget my fear.

O soul, O soul, rejoice !
Thou art God's child indeed, for all thy sinning ;
A poor weak child, yet his, and worth the winning
With saviour eyes and voice.

Who spake the words? Didst Thou?
They are too good, even for such a giver:
Such water drinking once, I should feel ever
As I had drunk but now.

Yet sure the Word said so,
Teaching our lips to cry with his, Our Father!
Telling the tale of him who once did gather
His goods to him, and go!

Ah, thou dost lead me, God!
But it is dark and starless, the way dreary
Almost I sleep, I am so very weary
Upon this rough hill-road.

Almost! Nay, I *do* sleep;
There is no darkness save in this my dreaming;
Thy fatherhood above, around, is beaming;
Thy hand my hand doth keep.

With sighs my soul doth teem;
I have no knowledge but that I am sleeping;
Haunted with lies, my life will fail in weeping;
Wake me from this my dream.

How long shall heavy night
Deny the day? How long shall this dull sorrow
Say in my heart that never any morrow
Will bring the friendly light?

Lord, art thou in the room?
Come near my bed; oh, draw aside the curtain!
A child's heart would say *Father*, were it certain
That it would not presume.

But if this dreary sleep
May not be broken, help thy helpless sleeper
To rest in thee; so shall his sleep grow deeper—
For evil dreams too deep.

Father! I dare at length;
My childhood sure will hold me free from blaming:
Sinful yet hoping, I to thee come, claiming
Thy tenderness, my strength.

BABY.

WHERE did you come from, baby dear?
Out of the everywhere into here.

Where did you get those eyes so blue?
Out of the sky as I came through.

What makes the light in them sparkle and spin?
Some of the starry twinkles left in.

Where did you get that little tear?
I found it waiting when I got here.

What makes your forehead so smooth and high?
A soft hand stroked it as I went by.

What makes your cheek like a warm white rose?
I saw something better than any one knows.

Whence that three-cornered smile of bliss?
Three angels gave me at once a kiss.

Where did you get this pearly ear?
God spoke, and it came out to hear.

Where did you get those arms and hands?
Love made itself into bonds and bands.

Feet, whence did you come, you darling things?
From the same box as the cherubs' wings.

How did they all just come to be you?
God thought about me, and so I grew.

But how did you come to us, you dear?
God thought about you, and so I am here.

LEGEND OF THE CORRIEVRECHAN.

PRINCE BREACAN of Denmark was lord of the strand,
And lord of the billowy sea ;
Lord of the sea and lord of the land,
He might have let maidens be !

A maiden he met with locks of gold,
Straying beside the sea :
Maidens listened in days of old,
And repented grievously.

Wiser he left her in evil wiles,
Went sailing over the sea ;
Came to the lord of the Western Isles :
Give me thy daughter, said he.

The lord of the Isles he laughed, and said :
Only a king of the sea
May think the Maid of the Isles to wed,
And such, men call not thee !

Hold thine own three nights and days
In yon whirlpool of the sea,
Or turn thy prow and go thy ways
And let the isle-maiden be.

Prince Breacan he turned his dragon prow
To Denmark over the sea :
Wise women, he said, now tell me how
In yon whirlpool to anchor me.

Make a cable of hemp and a cable of wool
And a cable of maidens' hair,
And hie thee back to the roaring pool
And anchor in safety there.

The smiths of Greydule, on the eve of Yule,
Will forge three anchors rare ;
The hemp thou shalt pull, thou shalt shear the wool,
And the maidens will bring their hair.

Of the hair that is brown thou shalt twist one strand,
Of the hair that is raven another ;
Of the golden hair thou shalt twine a band
To bind the one to the other !

The smiths of Greydule, on the eve of Yule,
They forged three anchors rare ;
The hemp he did pull, and he shore the wool,
And the maidens brought their hair.

He twisted the brown hair for one strand,
The raven hair for another ;
He twined the golden hair in a band
To bind the one to the other.

He took the cables of hemp and wool,
He took the cable of hair,
He hied him back to the roaring pool,
He cast the three anchors there.

The whirlpool roared, and the day went by,
And night came down on the sea ;
But or ever the morning broke the sky
The hemp was broken in three.

The night it came down, the whirlpool it ran,
The wind it fiercely blew ;
And or ever the second morning began
The wool it parted in two.

The storm it roared all day the third,
The whirlpool wallowed about,
The night came down like a wild black bird,
But the cable of hair held out.

Round and round with a giddy swing
Went the sea-king through the dark ;
Round went the rope in the swivel-ring,
Round reeled the straining bark.

Prince Breacan he stood on his dragon prow,
A lantern in his hand ;
Blest be the maidens of Denmark now,
By them shall Denmark stand !

He watched the rope through the tempest black,
A lantern in his hold :
Out, out, alack ! one strand will crack !
It is the strand of gold !

The third morn clear and calm came out :
No anchored ship was there !
The golden strand in the cable stout
Was not all of maidens' hair.

THE YERL O' WATERYDECK.

THE wind it blew, and the ship it flew,
And it was "Hey for hame !"
But up an' cried the skipper til his crew,
"Haud her oot ower the saut sea faem."

Syne up an' spak the angry king :
"Haud on for Dumferline !"
Quo' the skipper, "My lord, this maunna be—
I'm king on this boat o' mine !"

He tuik the helm intil his han',
He left the shore un'er the lee ;
Synce croodit sail, an', east an' south,
Stude awa richt oot to sea.

Quo' the king, "Leise-majesty, I trow !
Here lies some ill-set plan !
'Bout ship !" Quo' the skipper, "Yer grace forgets
Ye are king but o' the lan' !"

Oot he heild to the open sea
Quhill the north wind flaughtered an' fell ;
Syn e the east had a bitter word to say
That waukent a watery hell.

He turnt her heid intil the north :
Quo' the nobles, " He's droon, by the mass !"
Quo' the skipper, " Haud aff yer lady-han's
Or ye'll never see the Bass."

The king creepit down the cabin-stair
To drink the gude French wine ;
An' up cam his dochter, the princess fair,
An' luikit ower the brine.

She turnt her face to the drivin snaw,
To the snaw but and the weet ;
It claucht her snood, an' awa like a clud
Her hair drave oot i' the sleet.

She turnt her face frae the drivin win'—
" Quhat's that aheid ?" quo' she.
The skipper he threw himsel frae the win'
An' he brayt the helm alee.

" Put to yer han', my lady fair !
Haud up her heid !" quo' he ;
" Gien she dinna face the win' a wee mair
It's faurweel to you an' me !"

To the tiller the lady she laid her han',
An' the ship brayt her cheek to the blast ;
They joukit the berg, but her quarter scraped,
An' they luikit at ither aghast.

Quo' the skipper, "Ye are a lady fair,
An' a princess gran' to see,
But war ye a beggar, a man wud sail
To the hell i' yer company !"

She liftit a pale an' a queenly face,
Her een flashed, an' syne they swam :
"An' what for no to the hevin?" she says,
An' she turnt awa frae him.

Bot she tuik na her han' frae the gude ship's helm
Till the day begouth to daw ;
An' the skipper he spak, but what was said
It was said atween them twa.

An' syne the gude ship she lay to,
Wi' Scotlan' hyne un'er the lee ;
An' the king cam up the cabin-stair
Wi' wan face an' bluidshot ee.

Laigh loutit the skipper upo' the deck ;
"Stan' up, stan' up," quo' the king ;
"Ye're an honest loun—an' beg me a boon
Quhan ye gie me back this ring."

Lowne blew the win'; the stars cam oot ;
The ship turnt frae the north ;
An' or ever the sun was up an' aboot
They war intil the firth o' Forth.

Quhan the gude ship lay at the pier-heid,
And the king stude steady o' the lan',—
“Doon wi' ye, skipper—doon !” he said,
“Hoo daur ye afore me stan' !”

The skipper he loutit on his knee ;
The king his blade he drew :
Quo' the king, “Noo mynt ye to contre me !
I'm aboard *my* vessel noo !

“Gien I hadna been yer verra gude lord
I wud hae thrawn yer neck !
Bot—ye wha loutit Skipper o' Doon,
Rise up Yerl o' Waterydeck.”

The skipper he rasena : “Yer Grace is great,
Yer wull it can heize or ding :
Wi' ae wee word ye hae made me a yerl—
Wi' anither mak me a king.”

“I canna mak ye a king,” quo' he,
“The Lord alane can do that !
I snowk leise-majesty, my man !
Quhat the Sathan wad ye be at ?”

Glowert at the skipper the doutsum king
Jalousin aneth his croon ;
Quo' the skipper, "Here is yer Grace's ring—
An' yer dochter is my boon !"

The black blude shot intil the king's face—
He wasna bonny to see :
"The rascal skipper ! he lichtlies oor grace !—
Gar hang him heigh on yon tree."

Up sprang the skipper an' aboard his ship,
Cleikit up a bytin blade
An' hackit at the cable that held her to the pier,
An' thought it 'maist ower weel made.

The king he blew shill in a siller whustle ;
An' tramp, tramp, doon the pier
Cam twenty men on twenty horses,
Clankin wi' spur an' spear.

At the king's fute fell his dochter fair :
"His life ye wadna spill !"
"Ye daur stan' twixt my hert an' my hate ?"
"I daur, wi' a richt gude will !"

"Ye was aye to yer faither a thrawart bairn,
But, my lady, here stan's the king !
Luikna *him* i' the angry face—
A monarch's anither thing !"

“I lout to my father for his grace
Low on my bendit knee ;
But I stan’ an’ luik the king i’ the face,
For the skipper is king o’ me !”

She turnt, she sprang upo’ the deck,
The cable splashed i’ the Forth,
Her wings sae braid the gude ship spread
And flew east, an’ syne flew north.

Now was not this a king’s dochter—
A lady that feared no skaith ?
A woman wi’ quhilk a man nicht sail
Prood intil the Port o’ Death ?

THE MERMAID.

Up cam the tide wi’ a burst and a whush,
And back gaed the stanes wi’ a whurr ;
The king’s son walkit i’ the evenin hush,
To hear the sea murmur and murr.

—

Straucht ower the water slade frae the mune
A glimmer o’ cauld weet licht ;
Ane o’ her horns rase the water abune,
And lampit across the nicht.

Quhat's that, and that, far oot i' the gray,
The laich mune bobbin afore?
It's the bonny sea-maidens at their play—
Haud awa, king's son, frae the shore.

Ae rock stude up like an auld aik-root,
The king's son he steppit ahin';
The bonny sea-maidens cam gambolin oot,
Kaimin their hair to the win'.

O merry their lauch whan they fan the warm san',
For the lightsome reel sae meet!
Ilk ane flang her kaim frae her pearly han',
And tuik til her pearly feet.

But ane, wha's beauty was dream and spell,
Her kaim on the rock she cuist;
Her back was scarce turnt whan the munelicht shell
Was lyin i' the prince's breist!

The cluds grew grim as he watched their game,
Th' win' blew up an angry tune;
Ane efter ane tuik up her kaim,
And seaward gaed dancin doon.

But ane, wi' hair like the mune in a clud,
Was left by the rock her lane;
Wi' flittin han's, like a priest's, she stude,
'Maist veiled in a rush o' rain.

She spied the prince, she sank at his feet,
And lay like a wreath o' snaw
Meltin awa i' the win' and weet
O' a wastin wastlin thaw.

He liftit her, trimlin wi' houp and dreid,
And hame wi' his prize he gaed,
And laid her doon, like a witherin weed,
Saft on a gowden bed.

A' that nicht, and a' day the neist,
She never liftit heid ;
Quaiaet lay the sea, and quaiaet lay her breist,
And quaiaet lay the kirkyard-deid.

But quhan at the gloamin a sea-breeze keen
Blew intil the glimsome room,
Like twa settin stars she opened her een,
And the sea-floer began to bloom.

And she saw the prince kneelin at her bed,
And afore the mune was new,
Careless and cauld she was wooed and wed—
But a winsome wife she grew.

And a' gaed weel till their bairn was born,
And syne she cudna sleep ;
She wud rise at midnicht, and wan'er till morn,
Hark-harkin the sough o' the deep.

Ae nicht whan the win' gaed ravin aboot,
And the winnocks war speckled wi' faem,
Frae room to room she strayt in and oot,
And she spied her pearly kaim.

She twined up her hair wi' eager han's,
And in wi' the rainbow kaim !
She's oot, and she's aff ower the shinin san's
And awa til her moanin hame !

The prince he startit whaur he lay,
He waukit, and was himlane !
He soucht far intil the mornin gray,
But his bonny sea-wife was gane !

And ever and aye, i' the mirk or the mune,
Whan the win' blew saft frae the sea,
The sad shore up and the sad shore doon
By the lanely rock paced he.

But never again on the sands to play
Cam the maids o' the merry, cauld sea ;
He heard them lauch far oot i' the bay,
But hert-alane gaed he.

THE WAESOME CARL.

THERE cam a man to oor toon-en',
And a waesome carl was he,
Snipie-nebbit, and crookit-mou'd,
And gleyt o' a blinterin ee.
Muckle he spied, and muckle he spak,
But the owercome o' his sang,
Whatever it said, was aye the same :—
There's nane o' ye a' but's wrang !
Ye're a' wrang, and a' wrang,
And a'thegither a' wrang ;
There's no a man about the toon
But's a'thegither a' wrang.

That's no the gait to fire the breid,
Nor yet to brew the yill ;
That's no the gait to haud the pleuch,
Nor yet to ca the mill ;
That's no the gait to milk the coo,
Nor yet to spean the calf,
Nor yet to tramp the girnel-meal—
Ye kenna yer wark by half !
Ye're a' wrang, etc.

The minister wasna fit to pray
And lat alane to preach ;
He nowther had the gift o' grace
Nor yet the gift o' speech !
He mind't him o' Balaäm's ass,
Wi' a differ we nicht ken :
The Lord he opened the ass's mou,
The minister opened's ain !

He was a' wrang, and a' wrang,
And a'thegither a' wrang;
There wasna a man aboot the toon
But was a'thegither a' wrang!

The puir precentor couldna sing,
He gruntit like a swine;
The verra elders couldna pass
The ladles til his min'.
And for the rulin' elder's grace
It wasna worth a horn;
He didna half uncurse the meat,
Nor pray for mair the morn!
He was a' wrang, etc.

And aye he gied his nose a thraw,
And aye he crook't his mou;
And aye he cockit up his ee
And said, Tak tent the noo!
We snichert hint oor hoof, my man,
But never said him nay;
As gien he had been a prophet, man,
We loot him say his say:
Ye're a' wrang, etc.

Quo oor gudeman: The crater's daft!
Heard ye ever sic a claik?
Lat's see gien he can turn a han',
Or only luik and craik!
It's true we maunna lippin til him—
He's fairly crack wi' pride,

But he maun live—we canna kill him !
Gien he can work, he s' bide.
He was a' wrang, and a' wrang,
And a'thegither a' wrang ;
There, troth, the gudeman o' the toon
Was a'thegither a' wrang !

Quo he, It's but a laddie's turn,
But best the first be a sma' thing :
There's a' thae weyds to gether and burn,
And he's the man for a' thing !—
We yokit for the far hill-moss,
There was peats to cast and ca ;
O' 's company we thought na loss,
'Twas peace till gloamin-fa' !
We war a' wrang, and a' wrang,
And a'thegither a' wrang ;
There wasna man about the toon
But was a'thegither a' wrang !

For, losh, or it was denner-time
The toon was in a low !
The reek rase up as it had been
Frae Sodom-flames, I vow.
We lowst and rade like mad, for byre
And ruck bleetzt a' thegither,
As gien the deil had brought the fire
Frae's hell to mak anither !
'Twas a' wrang, and a' wrang,
And a'thegither a' wrang,
Stick and strae about the place
Was a'thegither a' wrang !

And luikin on, han's neth his tails,
The waesome carl stude ;
To see him wagglin at thae tails
'Maist drave 's a' fairly wud.
Ain wite ! he cried ; I tauld ye sae !
Ye're a' wrang to the last :
What gart ye burn thae deevilich weyds
Whan the win' blew frae the wast !
Ye're a' wrang, and a' wrang,
And a'thegither a' wrang,
There's no a man i' this fule warl
But's a'thegither a' wrang !

DR. WALTER C. SMITH.

From "OLRIG GRANGE."

I.

MATER DOMINA.

LADY ANNE DEWHURST on a crimson couch
Lay, with a rug of sable o'er her knees,
In a bright boudoir in Belgravia ;
Most perfectly arrayed in shapely robe
Of sumptuous satin, lit up here and there
With scarlet touches, and with costly lacc,
Nice-fingered maidens knotted in Brabant ;
And all around her spread magnificence
Of bronzes, Sèvres vases, marquetry,
Rare buhl, and bric-à-brac of every kind
From Rome and Paris and the centuries
Of far-off beauty. All of goodly colour,
Or graceful form that could delight the eye,
In orderly disorder lay around,
And flowers with perfume scented the warm air.

Stately and large and beautiful was she
Spite of her sixty summers, with an eye
Trained to soft languors, that could also flash
Keen as a sword and sharp—a black bright eye,

Deep sunk beneath an arch of jet. She had
A weary look, and yet the weariness
Seemed not so native as the worldliness
Which blended with it. Weary and worldly, she
Had quite resigned herself to misery
In this sad vale of tears, but fully meant
To nurse her sorrow in a sumptuous fashion,
And make it an expensive luxury ;
For nothing she esteemed that nothing cost.

Beside her, on a table round, inland
With precious stones by Roman art designed,
Lay phials, scents, a novel and a Bible,
A pill box, and a wine glass, and a book
On the Apocalypse ; for she was much
Addicted unto physic and religion,
And her physician had prescribed for her
Jellies and wines and cheerful Literature.
The Book on the Apocalypse was writ
By her chosen pastor, and she took the novel
With the dry sherry, and the pills prescribed.
A gorgeous, pious, comfortable life
Of misery she lived ; and all the sins
Of all her house, and all the nation's sins,
And all shortcomings of the Church and State,
And all the sins of all the world beside,
Bore as her special cross, confessing them
Vicariously day by day, and then
She comforted her heart, which needed it,
With bric-à-brac and jelly and old wine.

II.

THE SQUIRE.

THE Squire was banished to a little room
That overlooked a paved court and a mews ;
A small, close chamber, lined with dusty books
And dingy maps ; and savage crania
Grinned from high shelves, with clubs and arrow-heads
And tools of flint, and shields of hide embossed.
There were great cobwebs on the windows dim,
Where bloated spiders watched their webs, and heard
The blue-fly knock his head against the pane,
And buzz about their snares. And through the room,
On table and chair, were globes and glasses tall,
Retorts and crucibles, electric jars
And batteries, and microscopes and prisms
And balances, and fossil plants and shells,
Disorderly and dusty ; and the floor
Was carpeted with papers and thick-dust,—
Papers and books and instruments and dust.

A grey old man sat in that dim grey room,
Wrapt in a dressing-gown of soft grey stuff,
And puzzling o'er a paper wearily
Of circles, squares and pentagons, and lines
Of logarithms, he strove to disentangle.
He was a little, brisk, bald-headed man,
With fiery eyes, and forehead narrow and high
And far-retiring : one who could have led
A regiment to the belching cannon's mouth
If wisely ordered when ; or might have headed
The cheery hunt across the stubble field,

Taking the fences gallantly, nor turning
From the wide brook to seek the safer ford.
But being held in London half the year,
And with no taste for politics or fashion,
Or such religion as he came across,
He took to Science, made experiments,
Bought many nice and costly instruments,
Heard lectures, and believed he understood
Beetle-browed Science wrestling with the fact
To find its meaning clear ; but all in vain.
He thought he thought, and yet he did not think,
But only echoed still the common talk,
As might an empty room. The forehead high
And fiery eye had no reflection in them
To brood and hatch the secret of the world.
He could but skim and dip, like restless swallow
Fly-catching on the surface of all knowledge
Anthropologic and Botanical
And Chemical, and what was last set forth
By charlatan to stun the vulgar sense.
But yet a strain of noble chivalry
Ran through his nature, and a faint crisp humour
Rippled his thought, and would have been a joy
Had life been kindlier ; but like forming dew
Seized in the night, and chilled into the spikes
And crystals of the hoar-frost, so the play
And mirth of genial nature had been changed
Into sharp prickles ; and his cheeriest smile
Verged on a sneer, and ran to mocking laughter.
Yet under all his pottering at Science,
And deeper than his feeble cynic sneer,
Lay a great love, to which he fondly clung,
For Rose, the stately daughter of his house.

SCENE FROM "KILDROSTAN."

SCENE—*Kildrostan Park.* SIR DIARMID, *a Highland Chief,* and TREMAIN, *a Modern Poet.*

Sir Diarmid.

So we give up our cruise, then, after all?
'Tis well; for, as it happens, it would scarce
Have suited me to go. You'll not regret it?

Tremain.

Why should I? 'Twas a sudden fancy struck me,
And just as sudden left.

Sir Diarmid.

No other reason?

Tremain.

What other would you have? Must one have reasons
To knock down fancies with—a club to beat
The vapour off, that passes with a puff?
I choose to have my whims, and let them go
E'en as I list. It is a folly, man,
A superstition of these modern times,
To be in bonds to reason.

Sir Diarmid.

As you like.

But there's a nice breeze tripping on the Loch,
Tipping the waves with foam. Have you no fancy
To ride the white steeds in a merry gale?

Tremain.

Nay, that's all past. I hate a boisterous life.
Give me the calm of Tempe where no wind
Blows on the vine-stocks roughly, and where love
Pants in the sunshine dreamily among
The lotus' leaves and asphodels.

Sir Diarmid.

What then :

Are all those pictures of the bounding sea,
And billowy roll of life there, and your skill
With sail and rope and rudder in a storm
But so much moonshine ?

Tremain.

Moonshine ! surely no ;

But poetry of course. O you dull fellows,
Tied down to facts, you lose the half of life,
Missing its fancied part. I sit and dream
Of lying in a pinnace with my love,
On a pard's skin, or carpet Eastern-dyed
Of gorgeous colours, with a cloudless sun
Inflaming every sense, as we look down,
And watch the pulsing globe, and tangled arms
Of myriad Medusæ. Then I see
Ideal storms loom darkly, and the waves
Lashed into madness, which I master so
That by the sense of power we relish more
The soft delights of love. But your wet ropes
And clumsy oars—faugh ! they give blisters first
And then a horny hand ; and life is lost,
By so much, when you lose a perfect sense.

'Tis needful for my Art that I should have
Nice touch and taste and smell and sight and hearing,
That through all gates may fine sensations pass,
Into my being, and enrich my life.

Sir Diarmid.

Tush ! man ; you are not so effeminate
As you affect.

Tremain.

I never handled rope,
Nor held a tiller, nor yet mean to do :
A harp, even, blunts the finger-tips. You think
To be effeminate is to be weak :
I hold that manhood only then is perfect,
When it has all a woman's delicate sense,
And absolute refinement, and will answer,
Like the wind-harp, in tremulous response
To every breath of fancy.

Sir Diarmid.

How then shall you
Employ your holiday? Our ways are rough,
Nor do we fear to blunt a sense by use.

Tremain.

If I might just go on as now we do,
Bound to no method, held to no set plans,
Floating as Fancy wills, or Fate decrees !
Those hills are beautiful in the purple lights
Of evening, glassed upon the quiet Loch ;

And weird-like are the wavering morning mists,
Tinted with rainbow fragments, like the glories
Which hover in the cloudland of old times ;
And pleasant is the swaying of the boat,
And lapping of the waters ; and I think
I could write something smacking of the life
Of the young world, while yet the gods were in it,
As I look round, and see the fisherwomen
Wade through the surf i' the twilight to the boats,
Each with her husband, or her sweetheart, maybe,
Borne pick-a-back.

Sir Diarmid.

A barbarous custom ! I
Have tried to shame the men out of these ways,
And do not wonder that you mock at them.

Tremain.

I do not mock at them. I never felt
More tenderly to any ancient relic
Than to this fond survival. Let it be.
Why drive your modern ploughshare over all
The fields of primitive custom, making them
As flat and commonplace as turnip fields.
Let it alone. It is the antique symbol
Of woman's loyalty to love—a link
Uniting us with a more touching life
Of loyal service. Had I but such a Naiad—
Only not quite so freckled and uncombed—
To plash her large limbs in the waves for me !

Sir Diarmid.

Never was such a plea for barbarism
Pleaded before.

Tremain.

And yet as good a one
As you shall find for worshipping a maid,
Until she is a wife to worship you.
Why is it barbarous? Was the Greek a savage,
When the fair princess, with her laughing maidens,
Washed the white linens in the sparkling brook,
And lovers lay upon the grass, and noted
The dainty feet that splashed the shining spray?

Sir Diarmid.

Well, you may play the lawyer for the nonce,
And draw me out from murky heathen times
Precedents of authority to bar
The way of progress. But you'll not persuade me
The custom's not degrading.

Tremain.

Ay, in vain
We hope to master prejudice by reason.—
But how about this Doris you should wed,
And will not, though her acres are so handy?
What ails you at her?

Sir Diarmid.

This ; she loves me not,
As shrewdly I suspect ; nor love I her,
As certainly I know. And when we speak
Of marriage, that's a point at least.

Tremain.

I know not ;
I'm not a marrying man, though all my life
Is love and poetry, which mostly lose
Their glory at the touch o' th' wedding-ring.
It is a quakerish thing connubial bliss,
Tame and slow-blooded, dressed in browns and greys,
And with no flash of passion in the eye,
Or flush o' the cheek. Is she not beautiful ?

Sir Diarmid.

Truly ; yet with a dangerous kind of beauty,
Beauty as of a panther or a snake,
Lustrous and lithe ; or so at least she shows
To me who love her not. Her father wedded
In the far East a Hindoo girl, and so
The daughter is not, like our Highland maids
Ruddy and large with amber in their hair,
But slight and supple, and the sun has dyed
Her cheek with olive. Yet she is most fair.

Tremain.

Ah ! now you interest me. 'Tis just the kind
Of beauty that I worship. Helena's
Was dangerous, and the grand Egyptian Queen's
Who conquered the world's conquerors, and the sun
Had softly dusk'd the snow of cheek and bosom,
That chills our northern women. There's no joy
Without the sense of danger ; therefore men
Climb the precipitous mountains with a sense
Of tingling perilous gladness : and I hate
Your meek and milky girls that dare not kiss
A burning passion, clinging to your lips.

Sir Diarmid.

Doris is not a Cleopatra, nor
Helen of Troy—she's just a Highland lady
Touched with an Eastern strain. You must not liken
her
To your wild-eyed Aspasia.

Tremain.

But you said
Hers was a dangerous beauty like the serpent's,
And that is what I like above all things.
Serpents twine round you, clasp you in their folds,
And charm you with a gaze that does not flinch ;
Firing you as the many-husbanded
Helen was wont to do, till men would lose
The world for one brief rapture of her kiss.

Sir Diarmid.

I spoke too loosely: you misconstrue me,
So fancying her.

Tremain.

There's nothing else against her,
Except that dangerous beauty, which is only
The prejudice of people commonplace.
I like to play with adders. I had one
I loved once as you love your dog, and had
Subtler communion with it, richer thoughts
From its uprearings and its wondrous eyes
Than you shall get from any noisy hound
With its rough shows of liking.

Sir Diarmid.

Well, I'd rather
My dog should jump on me, and wheel about
Barking for joy, than have an adder twine
Slow folds about me. But tastes differ.

Tremain.

Ay,
They differ ; yet there is a worse and better,
For taste is the true test of character :
The crown of culture is a perfect taste,
Which lacking, men are blind and cannot see
The higher wisdom. 'Tis the want of it
That floods the world with stale stupidities,
And hangs a vulgar arras round the mind
Of misbegotten fallacies. Tastes differ !
And so do faiths and policies, but yet
Their differences are not indifferent.

Sir Diarmid.

You need not rave about it, man. I used
A common phrase, as one does current coin,
Not caring to ring copper half-pennies
Upon the counter.

Tremain.

Oh ! Yet I take leave
To doubt the taste that shrinks from such a girl
As you describe your Doris : that is all.
The kind of woman, bred of Christian cult,
Whom you call womanly, to me is watery—
A Ghost ; a mist that chills you with its touch.
How changed from the grand creature Nature made
For joy, and music, and the giddy dance,

And glorious passion ! There's a story of
Pelagia, leader of the mimes at Antioch
On the Orontes ; how she came one day
Up from the silvern baths with her fair troop
Of girls, all glowing with the flush of life,
And bounding with light mirth, and lures of love,
Like the young hinds what time the year reveals
The antlered stag freed from the down of his horns ;
And as she came, arrayed in purple skirt
Of Tyrian, golden bracelets on her wrists,
And tinkling anklets, and the flash of gems
Upon her bosom, on her brow of flowers —
Lo ! then an anchorite, dried up and baked
With dirt of some dim cave where he had burrowed
With bats and owls, looked wistfully on her,
And craftily assailed her with regrets
That she brought not her beauty and her joy—
Another Magdalene !—to serve his Lord :
Wherewith being touched, she turns a penitent,
And comes next day, and lays aside her robes
Of splendour, and her bright and joyous ways
So winsome, and in squalid garb arrayed
Of sackcloth, visits graves and lazar houses,
Pale as a lily—a shadow called a saint.
What think you now of such a work as that
To pleasure heaven with ? While the old gods lived,
A woman was the glory of our glad
And fruitful earth. But now you make of her——

Sir Diarmid.

I prithee, peace, man. If I did not know
This is but spinning moonshine for the love
Of phantasy, and framing paradox
To seem original, I could be wroth

With such trash-speaking. Interrupt me not.
What, if your leader of the mimes had been
A chaste pure maiden, daughter of a home
Where mother-love enfolded her in customs
As sweet as lavender, and that she met
Some gay apostle of the flesh, and as
His penitent, became—— what you have known ?
The world is bad enough, and false enough
Without such gloss to prove its darkness light.
The devil is up to that ; and does not need
That you should make fine clothes for him to wear
When he goes masking. Let this stuff alone ;
Or weave it into verses, if you will,
For fools to read, although I used to think—
But that was in my youth's fond innocence—
That poetry should stir the best in us,
And give fit utterance also to our best
In rhythmic music.

Tremain.

That was not your thought :
'Twas but an echo you and others tossed
From mouth to mouth, and thought that you had
thought.

Sir Diarmid.

Echo or living voice, the thought is true ;
God gives us song to make us nobler men
And purer women.

Tremain.

Nay, for art is not
The stave of virtue, turning songs to sermons ;
But it is free, and is its own excuse,
And finds its purpose in its exercise.

Sir Diarmid.

What do you mean?

Tremain.

This. Picturing truly all
Ideals—good or evil, as you call them—
Art doth fulfil her office, but comes short
Of her vocation when she aims at aught
But perfect form and colour and harmony.

Sir Diarmid.

Enough : I did not count on getting such
Art lectures from you. Keep them for the freshmen.

Tremain.

You make a pedant and a pedagogue
Of that which is the sovranest thing in nature,
The freest and the gayest. Out upon
The tyranny of small moralities,
Shop-keeping ethics, Pharisee respects !
As if high Art must minister to them,
Like a fair tablemaid who must not speak,
But let them prose and prose ! I hate it all.
For evil and good, yea sense and nonsense, Art,
Soaring above them in her own bright realm,
Yet lifts them up, and blends them in her charm
Of light and music and divinest vision.
But you are still in bonds to commonplace,
And cannot bear this yet.

Sir Diarmid.

Nor ever shall,
Nor ever wish to. One might land in Bedlam
For less conceit of wisdom.

Tremain.

By the way,
There's one thing more I wish to know. Last night,
Or rather in the gloaming, as you have it,
Upon the heights, beside the waterfall
That wavers like a tremulous white veil
Of bridal lace to hide the moss-clad rock,
I had a vision of beauty.

Sir Diarmid.

O belike,
The purple glow was on the hills.

Tremain.

Nay, but
A maiden passed me tall and beautiful,
Robed all in black. Her step was like a queen's,
Pallas-Athene had no statelier mien,
Broad-browed, large-eyed, and with the confidence
Of strength and courage in her. Who is she?

Sir Diarmid.

How should I know? No matter.

Tremain.

Girls like that

Can't walk about the shores incognito :
 You surely know her ; think of it again.
 I did but pass some pretty compliment—
 Thrown at her, to be picked up if she chose,
 Not spoken to her—an impromptu verse
 That sprang up to my lips at such a vision
 Of might and beauty delicately mixed,
 When she, just pausing, gave me such a look,
 As if she could have tossed me o'er the crag
 Into the pool, then leisurely swept on.
 Who is she ? All the fisher folk would say
 Was, It will be Miss Ina.

Sir Diarmid.

Ay, that was
 Ever her favourite walk. Now, if you chance
 To meet her there again, best let her pass
 Without impromptu verses. You might find
 They breed unpleasant consequences.

Tremain.

But

Who is she ?

Sir Diarmid.

Well ; no matter : my kinswoman.
 Her father was our pastor, lately dead—
 No more of her. When shall we visit Doris ?
 She's far more to your taste.

Tremain.

O when you will.
But that dark-robed Pallas-Athene—your
Kinswoman, said you ?

Sir Diarmid.

Surely you would not
Intrude upon the sacredness of sorrow
Like hers.

Tremain.

The parson's daughter—

Sir Diarmid.

She shall not be molested.
Sir, I tell you

Tremain.

So : I see
Why Doris' beauty is so dangerous.
Pallas-Athene broad-browed, shining-eyed;
That is your style, is't ?

[*Exit.*

Sir Diarmid.

Pshaw ! why should I care
For that fool's babble ? for a fool he is
With all his genius, which is but a trick
Of stringing words together musically.

How could I ever bring him to the home
Of pious, pure-souled women. Yet he'll serve
My purpose, if he only take to Doris,
And she to him—she is not over-nice.
But is it fair that I should plot and scheme
To save myself from a detested fate
By luring her into as dark a snare?
Nay, but I only bring these two together,
And by the mutual attraction of
Their kindred natures let them coalesce,
If so they will—and surely so they will:
Only the time is short. Yet such folk jump
Into their loves; and if it so befell,
My path were clear, and all should yet be well.

MISS PENELOPE LEITH.

LAST heiress she of many a rood,
Where Ugie winds through Buchan braes—
A treeless land, where beeves are good,
And men have quaint old-fashioned ways,
And every burn has ballad-lore,
And every hamlet has its song,
And on its surf-beat rocky shore
The eerie legend lingers long.
Old customs live there, unaware
That they are garments cast away,
And what of light is shining there
Is lingering light of yesterday.

Never to her the new day came,
Or if it came she would not see ;
This world of change was still the same
To our old-world Penelope :
New fashions rose, old fashions went,
But still she wore the same brocade,
With lace of Valenciennes or Ghent
More dainty by her darning made,
A little patch upon her face,
A tinge of colour on her cheek,
A frost of powder, just to grace
The locks that time began to streak.

A stately lady ; to the poor
Her manner was without reproach ;
But from the Causeway she was sure
To snub the Provost in his coach :
In pride of birth she did not seek
Her scorn of upstarts to conceal,
But of a Bailie's wife would speak
As if she bore the fisher's creel.
She said it kept them in their place,
Their fathers were of low degree ;
She said the only saving grace
Of upstarts was humility.

The quaint, old Doric still she used,
And it came kindly from her tongue ;
And oft the "mim-folk" she abused,
Who mincing English said or sung :
She took her claret, nothing loth,
Her snuff that one small nostril curled ;
She might rap out a good round oath,
But would not mince it for the world :

And yet the wild word sounded less
In that Scotch tongue of other days ;
'Twas just like her old-fashioned dress,
And part of her old-fashioned ways.

At every fair her face was known,
Well-skilled in kyloes and in queys ;
And well she led the fiddler on
To "wale" the best of his strathspeys ;
Lightly she held the man who rose
While the toast-hammer still could rap,
And brought her gossip to a close,
Or spoilt her after-dinner nap ;
Tea was for women, wine for men,
And if they quarrelled o'er their cups,
They might go to the peat-moss then,
And fight it out like stags or tups.

She loved a bishop or a dean,
A surplice or a rocket well,
At all the Church's feasts was seen,
And called the Kirk, Conventicle ;
Was civil to the minister,
But stiff and frigid to his wife,
And looked askance, and sniffed at her,
As if she lived a dubious life.
But yet his sick her cellars knew,
Well stored from Portugal or France,
And many a savoury soup and stew
Her game-bags furnished to the Manse.

But if there was a choicer boon
Above all else she would have missed,
It was on Sunday afternoon
To have her quiet game at whist

Close to the window, when the Whigs
Were gravely passing from the Kirk,
And some on foot, and some in gigs,
Would stare at her unhallowed work :
She gloried in her "devil's books"
That cut their sour hearts to the quick ;
Rather than miss their wrathful looks
She would have almost lost the trick.

Her politics were of the age
Of Claverhouse or Bolingbroke ;
Still at the Dutchman she would rage,
And still of gallant Grahame she spoke.
She swore 'twas right that Whigs should die
Psalm-snivelling in the wind and rain,
Though she would ne'er have harmed a fly
For buzzing on the window pane.
And she had many a plaintive rhyme
Of noble Charlie and his men :
For her there was no later time,
All history had ended then.

The dear old sinner ! yet she had
A kindly human heart, I wot,
And many a sorrow she made glad,
And many a tender mercy wrought :
And though her way was somewhat odd,
Yet in her way she feared the Lord,
And thought she best could worship God
By holding Pharisees abhorred,
By being honest, fearless, true,
And thorough both in word and deed,
And by despising what is new,
And clinging to her old-world creed.

THE CONFESSION OF ANNAPLE GOWDIE,
WITCH.

ANNIE WINNE and me
Were both at Yester kirk ;—
She on a broom, and I on a straw,
“ Horse and haddock ” o’er Berwick Law
We rode away in the mirk.

It was Fastern’s Even,
And we lichted down on a grave ;
Where an ape preached loud to a ghostly crowd,
Suzpliced well with a bonny white shroud,
And a corby sang the stave.

“ The covin ” all was there ;
Thirteen of us with “ the maid ” ;—
She was Bessie Vicar from Kelvin side ;
And wow ! but she hotched in her unco pride—
Deil thraw her neck for a jade.

And there was Pickle-the-wind,
And there was Over-the-dyke,
And Aillie Nesbit, Able-and-stout,
And Elspie Gourlay, Good-at-a-bout ;
Buzzing all like a byke.

Black Jock was in his tantrums ;
And hech ! but he was daft !
Alick Flett with his chanter het,
Fizzing whenever his lips it met,
Skirled away in the laft.

Oh, we were crouse and canty
A' doon in Yester kirk,
And we supped on the toad and the hooded crow,
Daintily spread on a coffin braw,
At midnight in the mirk.

And syne we held a session,
And tried the lasses there ;
Twal gruesome carles were elders good,
And a black tom-cat for bethral stood,
And the foul fiend took the chair.

And Elspie Gourlay first
Confessed to a strangled bairn ;
And Bessie Vickar allowed that she
Whummled a boat in a quiet sea,
With a bonny young bride in the stern,

And some had played their cantrips
Wi' poor wives' milking kine ;
And one had made an image good,
And crucified on the holy rood,
That the Laird's ae son nicht pine.

But me and Annie Winnie,
The foul thief kissed us baith ;
For we choked the priest on the Eucharist,
When he was glowering at Effie M'Christ,
And speaking of holy faith.

Hech ! sirs, but we had grand fun
Wi' the muckle black deil in the chair,
And the muckle Bible upside doon,
A' gangin' withershins roun' and roun',
And backwards saying the prayer.

About the warlock's grave
Withershins gangin' roun',
And kimmer and carline had for licht
The fat o' a bairn they buried that nicht,
Unchristened beneath the moon.

And, when the red cock crew
In the farmstead up on the hill,
And the black tom-cat began to mew,
Witch and warlock, away we flew
In the morning grey and chill.

And my gudeman was sleeping,
Wi' the besom at his side,
And hech ! but he kissed the bonny broom,
My braw gudeman, my auld bridegroom,
As I lichted doon frae my ride.

And Annie Winnie and me
Crack crouse o' Yester kirk,
And how she on the broom and I on a straw,
"Horse and haddock" o'er Berwick Law
Rode away in the mirk.

THE SELF-EXILED.

From "HILDA AMONG THE BROKEN GODS."

THERE came a soul to the gate of Heaven
 Gliding slow—
A soul that was ransomed and forgiven,
 And white as snow :
And the angels all were silent.

A mystic light beamed from the face
 Of the radiant maid :
But there also lay on its tender grace
 A mystic shade :
And the angels all were silent.

As sunlit clouds by a zephyr borne—
 Seem not to stir,
So to the golden gates of morn
 They carried her :
And the angels all were silent.

"Now open the gate, and let her in,
 And fling it wide,
For she has been cleansed from stain of sin,"
 St. Peter cried :
And the angels all were silent.

"Though I am cleansed from stain of sin,"
 She answered low,
"I came not hither to enter in,
 Nor may I go :"
And the angels all were silent.

“ I come,” she said, “ to the pearly door,
To see the Throne
Where sits the Lamb on the Sapphire Floor,
With God alone : ”
And the angels all were silent.

“ I come to hear the new song they sing
To Him that died,
And note where the healing waters spring
From His pierced side : ”
And the angels all were silent.

“ But I may not enter there,” she said,
“ For I must go
Across the gulf where the guilty dead
Lie in their woe : ”
And the angels all were silent.

“ If I enter heaven I may not pass
To where they be,
Though the wail of their bitter pain, alas !
Tormenteth me : ”
And the angels all were silent.

“ If I enter heaven I may not speak
My soul’s desire
For them that are lying distraught and weak
In flaming fire : ”
And the angels all were silent.

“ I had a brother, and also another
 Whom I loved well ;
What if, in anguish, they curse each other
 In the depths of hell ? ”
And the angels all were silent.

“ How could I touch the golden harps,
 When all my praise
Would be so wrought with grief-full warps
 Of their sad days ? ”
And the angels all were silent.

“ How love the loved who are sorrowing,
 And yet be glad ?
How sing the songs ye are fain to sing,
 While I am sad ? ”
And the angels all were silent.

“ O clear as glass is the golden street
 Of the city fair,
And the tree of life it maketh sweet
 The lightsome air : ”
And the angels all were silent.

“ And the white-robed saints with their crowns
 and palms
 Are good to see,
And O so grand are the sounding psalms !
 But not for me : ”
And the angels all were silent.

“ I come where there is no night,” she said,
 “ To go away,
And help, if I yet may help, the dead
 That have no day.”
And the angels all were silent.

St. Peter he turned the keys about,
 And answered grim ;
“ Can you love the Lord, and abide without,
 Afar from Him ? ”
And the angels all were silent.

“ Can you love the Lord who died for you,
 And leave the place
Where His glory is all disclosed to view,
 And tender grace ? ”
And the angels all were silent.

“ They go not out who come in here ;
 It were not meet :
Nothing they lack, for He is here,
 And bliss complete.”
And the angels all were silent.

“ Should I be nearer Christ,” she said,
 “ By pitying less
The sinful living or woeful dead
 In their helplessness ? ”
And the angels all were silent.

“Should I be liker Christ were I
 To love no more
The loved, who in their anguish lie
 Outside the door?”
And the angels all were silent.

“Did He not hang on the cursed tree,
 And bear its shame,
And clasp to His heart, for love of me,
 My guilt and blame?”
And the angels all were silent.

“Should I be liker, nearer Him,
 Forgetting this,
Singing all day with the Seraphim,
 In selfish bliss?”
And the angels all were silent.

The Lord Himself stood by the gate,
 And heard her speak
Those tender words compassionate,
 Gentle and meek :
And the angels all were silent.

Now, pity is the touch of God
 In human hearts,
And from that way He ever trod
 He ne'er departs :
And the angels all were silent.

And He said, "Now will I go with you,
Dear child of love,
I am weary of all this glory, too,
In heaven above :"
And the angels all were silent.

"We will go seek and save the lost,
If they will hear,
They who are worst but need me most,
And all are dear :"
And the angels were not silent.

EARL OF SOUTHESK.

From "JONAS FISHER: A POEM IN BROWN AND
WHITE."

[Jonas Fisher, a philosophical young shop-man, who has led a dissipated life, has been "converted," after an illness, and has taken to district-visiting. The second speaker in the dialogue is Mr. Grace, his mentor.—It may be stated here that the motive underlying the poem of *Jonas Fisher* is the exaltation in all things, and especially in religion, of "the spirit" above "the letter"; and that the extreme simplicity, at times verging upon rudeness, of the *style* of the poem is adopted as in harmony with that motive.—ED.]

MY mission day is Saturday,
For then at Two shop-work is o'er,
(On Sabbath, day of rest, I go
Three times to church, and prayers before),

And all the afternoon I give
To visiting the poor indeed;
Rich people scarce could even guess
The wretched life these creatures lead.

Each house is many stories high,
Each room a family contains;
And there they breed, and breathe foul air,
Like rats inhabiting the drains.

Though, when one comes to think of it,
The rats are far more clean and sweet ;
These people neither comb nor wash,
Rats trim their fur and keep it neat.

O dear ! O dear ! the sights one sees !
In a close court the other day,
I saw some lean, large-stomached babes,
All busy at their childish play :

They dabbled in the thick black slime,
Stuck fish-heads in and drew them out,
Made pies of stuff much worse than mud,
While fat blue-bottles buzzed about.

Poor innocents ! for those who die
In early years what bliss untold,
To pass from filth and haddock-heads
To seas of glass and streets of gold !

I prayed an earnest prayer for them,
Then turned and climbed a winding stair
That smelt of cats, knocked at a door,
Half opened it, and looked in there.

Notions do differ. Some good folk
Are to the poor quite rough behaved :
Push into rooms, hat on, and cry—
“ Well, how’s your soul ? Friend, are you saved ? ”

Attention thus they hope to draw
By sudden pain or startling noise ;
As pedlars shout to puff their wares,
Or teachers lash their careless boys.

But I have always liked to act
On "Do as you'd be done by" rule,
And show the manners that I learned
At my dear native Berkshire school.

Well, at the opening door I paused,
Stood still and just put in my chin,
Took off my hat, half bowed, and said—
"Good afternoon. May I come in?"

An inner porch I then perceived ;
The door that moment open burst,
Out rushed two angry Irish wives,
And shook their fists, and raged and cursed.

"Off with you, dirty Protestant !
You beast ! you devil ! get away."
(I cannot write their curious brogue,
But tell the things they meant to say.)

On hearing this I breathed a prayer—
Which helps one much, and much protects—
"Don't call me Protestant," I said,
"All Christians don't belong to sects."

"You're not a Christian, sure, at all ;
You're one that mocks God's mother mild."
"Blest above women she,"—says I.
I smiled, and then the women smiled.

This kind of wide-mouthed Irish folk,
Change like a swallow in its flight ;
One, two,—they want to shed your blood,
Three, four,—they're friendly and polite.

"Come in, Sir, come," the women said,
And wiping clean their only chair,
They moved it tow'rds me ; suddenly
I heard a growl as from a bear,

And off his bed there leaped a man,
A huge, half-drunken, savage beast ;
He seized a knife, and ran at me ;
I stood, and did not budge the least,

But fixed my eyes upon his eyes,
And cowed him through God's help—as when
An angel stopped the lions' mouths
From eating Daniel in the den.

Then both the women made a rush,
And threw themselves upon the man,
And caught him by his arms and legs :
Oh ! what a dreadful scene began.

They reel, they roll, they twist about,
(Like the three Greeks that fought with snakes—
One sees them in the plaster casts—)
The windows dance, the flooring shakes.

As music at a wild-beast show,
With roars and cries combines its strum,
So shouts, yells, howls together rose,
Rap, rap, went oaths like tap of drum.

Crack goes the fellow's rotten shirt,
One half flies this way, one half that ;
But ere his trowsers also split,
The broad-backed women laid him flat,

And put him helpless on his bed,
And tossed and turned him as they chose ;
He gave a few indignant snorts,
Then passed into a drunken doze.

Thus fell the mighty—luckily ;
And now came pleasant times indeed,
The women so polite and kind,
So glad to hear me pray and read.

They really scarce would let me go,
They hungered for the food of Life ;
Next week their zeal was just the same ;
The next, they chased me with a knife.

The priest, of course, had come meanwhile,
And heavy threats upon them laid :
I owe no grudge ; as one might say,
He did it in the way of trade.

But still when people take to hunt
A missionary down the street,
Then at their door—in Scripture phrase—
He shakes the dust from off his feet.

Well, after that, I went to see
A far more quiet set than these :
An old Italian and his wife,
Who dealt in stucco images.

Gambetti was their name, I think,
An inoffensive sort of pair ;
They scarcely knew one English word,
But treated me with courteous care.

Such funny things upon their shelves,—
Queens, Holy Virgins, Neptune, Mars,
And several naked Goddesses,
Pigs, Angels, and a Prince with stars :

Young Samuel kneeling in his shirt ;
Crusoe with parrot, gun, and goat ;
St. John in Patmos with a bird ;
And baby Moses in his boat :

Dogs, cats, canaries, heroes, saints,
All green and scarlet, gold and blue ;
Things much too sacred to be named ;
The " Dying Gladiator " too.

(Some lines about that plaster cast
Quite long ago my fancy took—
" Butchered to make a holiday "—
I have them in my extract-book.

And to myself, when people fail
In pious public-speech, I say—
" Butchered is this good gentleman
To make a Christian holiday. ")

Leaving Gambetti and his wife,
Another quiet call I made,
Within a rather decent house,
Where a sick, aged woman stayed.

Midst weakness, loneliness, and pain,
Her every look seemed praise to sing ;
In heart she was a holy saint,
Though such a poor old doting thing.

A few small comforts she possessed—
Whose lot is there that nothing mends?—
First place, a store of books, the gift
Of kind Episcopalian friends.

Now, though to favour sect o'er sect
Is not my way, I must attest
That of all pious books I see,
Episcopalian are the best.

So full of manly, simple faith,
So rich in warmth and sweet content,
No harsh malignant threatenings,
No cold hard-hearted argument.

I'm speaking of the genuine thing,
The good old-fashioned stately school ;
Asses will bray in lion-skins,
And wolves will howl in coats of wool.

So when I called on Widow Smith,
I chose some volume from her shelf
And read to her, and thus I got
No little profit for myself.

For if a teacher never learns,
His prayers and talk grow weak and cold ;
As spiders that go spinning on
Spin webs at last that will not hold.

Another joy the widow had,—
I am not one that strains at gnats,
I did not blame her foolish waste,—
She kept three lazy, greedy cats.

What could the creatures get to eat?
No rats or mice would enter where
Provisions were so very scarce;
Cats surely cannot live on air—

Though in such rooms the atmosphere's
Close substance might be almost carved,—
Quite strange it seemed to see them fat,
While Widow Smith was nearly starved.

This is a contradiction odd,
Which meets you every day you live:
The rich most often like to keep,
The poor most often like to give.

They get so little at a time
That thrift seems scarcely worth their pains;
At length they lose the power to save,
But spend, give, waste, till naught remains.

Minds are, like bodies, slaves to use,
And wrongful habits mischief breed;
Crammed stomachs learn to hold too much,
Starved ones can't keep the food they need.

Good Widow Smith! Some ten days thence,
When last that humble floor I trod,
Her poor old frame was stiff in death,
Her saintly soul had gone to God.

“Had gone to God”—strange phrase, methinks!
As if some special house were His.
Is earth a place where God is not?
Let's say—“Her soul had gone to bliss.”

I saw her just before she died,
Calm, trustful, patient, and resigned ;
She would have been in perfect peace,
But for one thought that vexed her mind.

Grasping my arm she drew me close,—
I scarce could hear her voice at all,—
“Oh ! Jonas, if it were His will,
I’d like a decent funeral.”

I kissed her brow, and pledged myself
That what she wished should come to pass ;
Smiles swiftly flitted o’er her face,
As butterflies across the grass.

Once more she smiled, then closed her eye
And never opened them again :
At set of sun she slipped away
Without a struggle or a pain.

INFLUENCE OF THE COURSE OF TIME ON NATIONAL LOOKS.

(From the same.)

“OF potent causes that affect
The face or form, to mould or blight—
Disease or violence apart,—
Nerve force exerts the chiefest might.

“And as time rolls, each chance and change
Brings with it change of nervous strain ;
Thus every generation bears
An impress never borne again.

“More quick, more slow, the impress strikes,
As changes quick or slow take place—
Those who would read a nation’s past,
May read it in a nation’s face.”

“Well then,” said I, “I’d like to know
What a philosopher would say
About the sort of people, Sir,
One has to do with every day.”

Said he, “I should prefer to take
A broader view of things, and try
How far our English portraiture
Illustrates English history.”

“How early, Sir, shall we begin?”
Said I. “But little can we bring,”
He answered, “of a date more old
Than that of the first Tudor king,

“To help us much. But yet methinks
On coin, or brass, or burial-stone,
One sees a type of countenance,
Through centuries, quite unlike our own.

“And, speaking in the general mode,
I think one, on the whole, observes
A grave, calm, firm-fleshed, oval face,
Of strong unwavering lines and curves.

“ But pass we to those glorious days
When art from her long slumber woke,
When knowledge re-illumed her lamp,
And link by link Rome’s fetters broke :

“ When England also feels the thrill,
Strong wafted on the breath of time
Full o’er her distant ocean waves,
Of high things revelling in their prime ;—

“ Then her whole range of portraiture,
Of statesman, warrior, noble dame,
Bears constant stamp of fleshly waste
Through heat of intellectual flame.

“ Till those resplendent years arrive
When Shakespeare trod this honoured earth,
And round him lived the noblest men
That e’er from England drew their birth.

“ Ah ! then behold the perfect type,
Where flesh and soul and spirit blend
In measure which the most allows
That glory should in all transcend :

“ Long-visaged, strong-chinned, high of nose ;
Large-eyed, with gaze stern, sweet, sublime ;
Well-bearded, grand of chest and arm ;
Browed as if brain to heaven would climb.—

“ Ere half a century had flown
A different visage meets the eye,—
Of courtly nobleness in some,
In others of a type less high.

“The Cavalier and Puritan
Two varying types present to view—
The greyhound slim, the mastiff stout ;—
Yet both have in them something new :

“In one a selfish vanity,
In one a dry pedantic pride ;
Their sires and grandsires o’er them tower
As Shakespeare placed at Milton’s side.

“Then worse succeeds, both soul and frame
Degenerate ; beauty, strength decay ;
Hard, false, dull logic (called ‘good sense’),
And brutal hoggishness, bear sway.

“The Cavalier has now become
A strumous fool with goggled eyes,
And bulbous brow, and fat pink lips,
Small chin, and cheeks of lumpish eyes.

“The Puritan—an atheist now,
Save that he serves a belly-god—
Presents a huge, rough, jowly face,
Topped by a cranium low and broad.

“But ere a deeper depth was plumbed,
(If deeper depth indeed there were),
It pleased the Lord to send a storm
Which cleared the moral atmosphere,—

“The fierce French Revolution. This
(To change the figure) brought to birth,
By devil-wrought Cæsarean act,
Incarnate health for all the earth.

“ Then followed war and furious change,
The nations to their centres shook ;—
Behold the features of mankind
Once more a faithful history-book !

“ I know not if that storm set loose
New fiends, but since methinks we trace
A new and potent element
Disturbing, injuring oft, the face,—

“ An influence on the nerves, displayed
In the inquiring restless glance
And complex feature-lines, that mark
The nineteenth-century countenance.”

Said I, “ To judge by pictures, Sir,
Our grandfathers when young appeared
Much like young people nowadays,
Except that then they wore no beard.”

“ Perhaps,” said he ; “ it takes some time—
Most oft at least—to fix a brand
So plainly on a race that all
Can see the change. And yet the hand

“ Of change can never bear on minds
And leave the bodies uncontrolled ;
Our sires’ or grandsires’ minds were young,
Their sons’ or grandsons’ minds are old.

“ The influence of the camp is seen
In their rough, hasty, manly force
Of speech and thought ; our younger race
Is weaker, slower, and less coarse.

“ Contrast the mighty torrent-sweep
Of Byron’s fierce impassioned lays,
With the meandering placid flow
Of his deep verse who wears the bays

“ In these our times ; or gallant Scott,
Whose rhymes rush on like charge of lance ;
Or Campbell, whose heroic strains
Are battle’s trumpets of advance.

“ It is not that our moderns lack
All fiery essence in their mind ;
But what belongs to flesh and blood
Appears to them so unrefined,

“ That to make simple manifold,
And clear obscure, they take much pains—
The grandsires wrote with all their hearts,
The grandsons write with all their brains.”

NOVEMBER’S CADENCE.

THE bees about the Linden-tree,
When blithely summer blooms were springing,
Would hum a heartsome melody,
The simple baby-soul of singing :
And thus my spirit sang to me
When youth its wanton way was winging ;
“ Be glad, be sad—thou hast the choice—
But mingle music with thy voice.”

The linnets on the Linden-tree,
Among the leaves in autumn dying,
Are making gentle melody,
A mild, mysterious, mournful sighing :
And thus my spirit sings to me
While years are flying, flying, flying ;
 "Be sad, be sad—thou hast no choice—
 But mourn with music in thy voice."

THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

YE mountains of rock in the Land of the West,
Ye mountains of glory, for ever be blest !
Blest, blest be your valleys with vast craggy walls,
Your icy blue torrents and white waterfalls.
 But oh ! to be up on the heights, alone,
 Where the pretty grey Siffleur sits still on a stone ;
 Sits on a stone and whistles and sings,
 And trances the heart with his magic spell ;
 Sacredly sad his music rings,
 Clear as the tones of a silver bell,—
 Sounds that weep, that aspire, that pray,
 Like angels calling a soul away.

How grandly, O mountains, your forests are spread
O'er the low sunny slope in the valley's deep bed,
How sweet the pine-fragrance that gladdens the air
In the haunts of the Moose and the grim Grisly Bear !
 But oh ! to be up on the heights, alone,
 Where the curly-horned Mountain Ram dwells with
 his own ;

Dwells with his own on the pleasant steep,
Quenches his thirst at the glacier brook,
Crops the sweet grasses that crisply creep
To cover the sides of a sheltered nook ;
Wanders a while, or rests at his ease
Basking in sunshine and screened from the breeze.

Magnificent mountains ! when dawn has begun
How proudly your pinnacles shine in the sun !
Bright o'er your far summits gold fire-glories glow,
Then descend crag by crag to the valleys below.
And oh ! to be up on the heights, alone,
Where the snowy Goat climbs on the chaos of stone ;
Climbs the rock waste with his wide black feet,
Scales the ice-cliff whence the waters part,
Shades his thick fleece, from the noon-tide heat,
In the crater sunk to a mountain's heart—
Trees and green grass in the depths of it lie,
And a little blue lake that mirrors the sky.

Loved mountains ! blest mountains ! how fair, yet how
strange,
When the moon overtops your majestical range !
Shows a thin radiant arc, straight leaps full into sight,
And illumes your vast caves with her silver-sheen light.
Then oh ! to be down by the blazing logs,
In the midst of good hunters and horses and dogs.
Fragrantly smokes the resinous pine,
Tall is the spire of its broad red blaze,
The eyes of the horses like beryls shine,
The torrent glitters with golden rays.
Not a sound in the night but is near and small,
And vast is the silence that broods on all.

THE GERMAN TOWER-KEEPER.

GOD bless our good prince, and establish his crown !
For I am the highest of men in his town.
Of women, however exalted in life,
The highest of all are my daughter and wife.
 Yes, far above folks' heads we dwell,
 And watch the town from hour to hour :
 Their goings-on we see right well
 From off the Margarethen Tower.

Our eight-sided mansion has windows all round—
We fear not foul vapours that cling to the ground,—
Whatever the weather, we get our full share
Of the warmth of the sun and the cool of the air.
 No blinds shut out the light of day,
 But every window has its flower,
 And thus we keep a garden gay
 Up in the Margarethen Tower.

Just under our feet are the tops of the limes,
Great trees of the ancient majestical times ;
They spread their wide billows of blossom abroad,
And smell like a newly-made Eden of God.
 Small birds and pigeons sing and coo
 Within that fragrant yellowy bower,
 And rear their young ones in our view
 Beside the Margarethen Tower.

Hemmed in by the trees are the church's old tiles,
Which gladden our eyes with their ruddy-brown smiles ;

High music the organ and choristers raise,
And encompass our home with an ether of praise.
We trust in God, and fear no shock
When lightning-clouds around us lour,
Nor when the furious tempests rock
The crumbling Margarethen Tower.

How pleasant to stand in the evening's soft light,
And watch the bright backs of the swallows in flight !
These angel-winged swifts heavenly messengers seem,
Though black be their plumage and piercing their scream.
Give, give me nature's blesséd tones !
Art's sweets compared with them are sour.
May swallows ever love the stones
Of our dear Margarethen Tower !

Three mighty great bells in the belfry are hung—
An earthquake for us when on holidays rung—
The big one a giant beneath it might hold,
The new one is less, but more precious than gold.
Cast from French cannon is that bell.
To Him who made the foeman cower
Its glorious notes thanksgivings tell,
From the brave Margarethen Tower.

And still, as the minutes creep stealthily on,
We notice the time when each quarter is gone,
And then little Süschen a crank works about,
And a block strikes the bell, and the thunder booms out.
Strange that a tiny tender maid
O'er sounds so great should have the power !
But weight by wit is always swayed,
As in the Margarethen Tower.

Well pleased are my wife and my daughter and I
To live by ourselves up aloft in the sky.
Our chiefest of wishes is never to part :
We are poor of the pocket, but rich of the heart.
Six old, four young, canary birds
Make little Süschen's only dower.
Oh, sweet is she beyond all words—
Joy of the Margarethen Tower.

God bless our good prince ! As I sit here installed
And gaze on the spread of the Thüringer Wald,
Its heights all arrayed in the evening's gold glow,
I myself feel a prince o'er the city below.
God guard our prince and people well,
And every blessing on them shower—
On them, and me and mine that dwell
In the old Margarethen Tower !

THE MOUNTAIN FIR.

THEY sat beneath the mountain fir,
Beneath the evening sun ;
With all his soul he looked at her—
And so was love begun.

The titmice blue in fluttering flocks
Caressed the fir-tree spray ;
And far below, through rifted rocks,
The river went its way.

As stars in heavenly waters swim
Her eyes of azure shone ;
With all her soul she looked at him—
And so was love led on.

The squirrel sported on the bough
And chuckled in his play ;
Above the distant mountain's brow
A golden glory lay.

The fir-tree breathed its balsam balm,
With heather scents united,
The happy skies were hushed in calm—
And so the troth was plighted.

PIGWORM AND DIXIE.

[Joey Peggram, or "Pigworm," laments over the bygone bachelor days of Ben Dixie, his former boon companion.—ED.]

WELL ! if ever a man is in want of a wife
To poison his pleasure and pester his life,
First place let him go to Ben Dixie's, you know,
And see what that awful example will show.

Oh, such a good fellow was rollicking Ben,
Beloved by the girls and the right sort of men !
You may call me a lie, but—'pon honour 'tis said—
For a twelvemonth he never went sober to bed.

Yes ; rollicking Ben was a fellow of sense,
Who hated all stick-me-up, humbug pretence ;
As to that I can swear, for no hogs in the sty
Were more thick with each other than Dixie and I.

What a jolly old crib was his house in the dale,
A Garden of Eden of 'baccy and ale :
Any hour of the day you could eat at your ease,
There were always some ends of cold bacon or cheese.

Lawk ! now if you enter his prig of a house,
Not a scrap can you find that would serve for a mouse ;
And you wait and you wait till the dinner comes in,
Though perhaps you're as hungry and thirsty as sin,

But at last there's a row,—jingle-jing goes a bell,
And you sit yourself down, and you feed like a swell.
Oh, that shiny new tablecloth !—give me the cheer
Of the old one, all gravy and mustard and beer !

Ah yes, Mrs. Dixie, you're awfully neat,
With your fat little hands and your smart little feet ;
And you trot up and down, and you perk up your head,
And you smell like a rose in a lavender bed.

And you smirk and you smile, and you puff out your
breast
Like a pigeon a-pouting and walking its best ;
And so mighty polite—why, a fellow can't dare
To chaff when he wants to, and swagger and swear !

Lawk ! I'd like to yell out, like a throttle-choked hen,
When I think of the days of good *bachelor* Ben ;
No wife to torment one, dressed up like a doll,—
But that jolly kind creature, young housekeeper Moll.

She was something to see, as you smoked in your chair,
With her rolling black eyes and the kink in her hair ;
With her shoes down at heel, and her cheeks pink as
paint,
And holes in her stockings—no beastly constraint !

And her ringlets they smelt like a hairdresser's shop :
And her dress was green stuff, spattered over with slop :
And her hands were good large ones, her ankles were
thick,
And her nails they were bitten clean down to the quick.

She'd a taste of a temper, but nothing like vice—
It is downright unchristian to be too precise ;
For a shy with a bottle I don't know her match ;
But good lawk ! what is that when a fellow can catch ?

Oh, wasn't it prime ! you could drink, you could smoke,
You could chuck out a curse, you could sing, you could
joke ;
Things are changed now, alas !—all is bother and bore,—
Why, the Missus looks wild if you spit on the floor !

Faugh ! to hear how they jaw, it quite gives one a turn,—
As if words were hot mealy potatoes that burn ;
“ A little more beef, please,”—then faces they pull ;
Can't he say,—“ Shove us over some more of the bull ” ?

Yes, I hate the whole set with their finikin ways.
It was "live and let live" in the jolly old days,
The hens in the kitchen took all that they chose,
And the pups in the parlour rolled over your toes.

But now (set us up !) they've a precious fine lot
Of young-uns who gobble the pick of the pot ;
And they sit up so pert, each small brat in its place,
And when stuffed nigh to bursting they squeak out a grace !

Well, perhaps I'm not perfect, though fairly so-so ;
But, thank Heav'n, I'm no hypocrite—hang it all, no !
Before I'd go in for that sanctified bosh—
I'd as soon send a red flannel shirt to the wash !

Jolly Ben, bless his soul ! when he used to begin
He would swear till you thought the old Deuce had come
in :
Now see him with Missus, as prim as a pea,
Trudging slowly to church, with the brats in their lee.

Mrs. Dixie got up in her lavender dress ;
And poor Ben such a swell as no words can express,
With white pants, and a rose, and a tile with a twist,
And a pair of small girls hanging on to his fist.

So they toddle along to the jole of the bell,
And they go to a pew, and get blest with a spell
Of singing and preaching and things in that style—
Ben sleeps, I'll be bound, for the most of the while !

But humbug for ever ! hypocrisy pays,
Like the bills on the walls about pickles and plays ;
Yes, it's worth heaps of cash to be called "honest Ben,"
And be toadied and praised by all manner of men.

Who but he ! they can't meet to be jolly and dine,
After judging the horses and cattle and swine,
But up starts Squire Blount—"Fill a bumper," says he,
"For a toast in which no one can fail to agree,—

"The health of that pattern to farmers and all,
Mr. Benjamin Dixie of Rosemary Hall !"
Then they clap their fat paws, and they roar, and they
swill—
Euch ! bring me a basin, I'm going to be ill.

If there's one thing I hate it's that bumptious conceit—
To set up to be tidy and pretty and neat :
It's as much as to say to a fellow, you see,
"What does nicely for you is not fit for big me !"

Instead of the grass and the puddles of muck,
And the sow with her piggies, and goosey and duck,
And a midden, and plenty old kettles and tubs,
They've got gardens and roses, and things they call shrubs.

Just you walk through the garden and tear off a flow'r
For a shy at the hens—don't the Missus look sour !
Or go near those cantankerous buffers of bees—
After you, sir, is manners ; you first, if you please !

Why those brutes won't abide me I really can't say,
For whenever they see me they hunt me away :
They object to bad smells,—but that isn't my case,
Few days but I souse both my hands and my face.

Now Ben Dixie he scrubs in a terrible way,
Till he shines like a sixpence and smells of new hay ;
I liked him far better all mire, muck, and grease,
When the man and his midden were quite of a piece.

What nonsense they talk about scrubbing off dirt—
As if things that come natural ever could hurt !
But Ben, the big booby, has grown like the eels,
The more he is skinned, the more lively he feels.

If you stay for the night at that Rosemary Hall,
You're a mighty queer chap if you like it at all.
"Fresh air," quoth the blockhead ! I say it's a chouse
To hang out in a windmill and call it a house.

And there's lots of oak panels as bright as the stars,
And the place stinks of roses and blue-and-white jars ;
And your bed's got white curtains that can't be drawn
round,
And you tumble and grunt like a pig in a pound.

And you're nearly sent mad with the peppery smell
Of dead flow'rs dry in bowls, and of live ones as well ;
And the nightingales sing till you wish 'em in Spain,
And at dawn you've the thrushes and blackbirds again.

And your nice morning sleep is disturbed by the noise
Of dear Ben's blessêd darlings, his girls and his boys,
A-feeding the turkeys with stuff from a pail,
And screechy pea-devils with eyes in the tail.

And there's booing of oxen and mooing of cows ;
And the hogs and the horses—confound 'em for rows !
And the sheep, and the cur-dog bow-wowling the flock :
Oh, of course ! Master Dixie keeps excellent stock.

Poor wretch ! I don't fancy that anything pays
For toiling and moiling—I live all *my* days :
A sort of a god, with my 'baccy and bowl,
As jolly and snug as a toad in a hole.

No, it ain't mighty grand, but it suits to a T,
It's a capital den for a fellow like me.
No draughts and dry roses to keep you a-snort,
But a sensible place looking into a court.

On the ground-floor of course,—I object to a stair,
For the higher you go you get more of the air ;
The grate's pretty big, but the window's quite small—
Such a fit, sir ! in fact it won't open at all.

There ain't neither shutter nor bothersome blind,
But there's dust on the glass, and the sun keeps behind ;
And I snooze on my bed for the most of the day,
And the best of the night I am up and away.

Oh, it's jolly to lie on your back half a-doze,
And to kick off the quilt with your lazy old toes ;
And you stare at your stockings as long as you please,
And you wriggle your trousers right over your knees.

Then you stretch, and get hold of your pipe for a whiff,
And make matters serene with a drop of the "stiff" ;
If you're peckish inclined, there is nothing to do
More easy than fry a red herring or two.

As Bill Shakespeare remarks, "There is no place like
home,"

I'm as proud of my crib as a cock of his comb ;
Life's sweet there—though once, I must really confess,
I had nearly dropped in for a bit of a mess.

A young cove he came canting with tracts on the sly,
"Converting" he called it : "Now, Mister," said I,
"Unless your name's 'Walker' this instant, d'ye see,
We'll 'convert' you to sausage, will Towzer and me."

So he turned—did this cove—pretty white in the gill:
"Good-day, sir," says he ; "as you like me so ill,
I'll never come in to annoy you no more,—
Though I'm bound to be sometimes a-passing your door."

Well, before it got dark on that very same day,
I was taken all no-how, a queer kind of way ;
All my bones and my gizzards were aching like fun,
And my brains were like boots hanging out in the sun.

Oh, I felt monstrous bad, and I soon got so weak
I could scarce raise my head, and I hardly could speak ;
And no creature came near me, I thought I should die,—
When at length sounds the step of a man passing by.

And old Towzer he kicks up a deuce of a din,
And the door opens slow, and a fellow peeps in—
Nick Chousem, my partner ;—says he, “ Here’s a go !
Bye-bye, Joey Pigworm,—it’s small-pox, you know.”

And I lay and I blubbered. The rest I forget.
When I opened my peepers, the first thing they met
Was the mission-cove, watching me anxious and fond,
Like a hen whose small ducks are a-swim in a pond.

Well, of course I recovered—that’s middling clear,
For if I’d skedaddled I shouldn’t be here :
That good cove pulled me out of Old Gooseberry’s gripe,—
And his tracts came quite useful for lighting one’s pipe.

Not ungrateful, sir, no ! he declined my advice,
But I showed him neat things with the cards and the
dice ;
And my dog runs to meet him a-wagging its tail,
And it grins “ How d’ye do ” like a shark in a gale.

No, it don’t pay a bit to be seedy, you see,—
Not, at least, for mere common-sense snobbies like me :
But Ben !—let his thumb ache, they rush to inquire,—
Town, village, and country, lord, parson, and squire.

Lawk, when Ben comes to die ! bless their heads and
their eyes,
How the crape and the white pocket-wipers will rise !
And the funeral cards will be scattered like peas,
And the folks will come swarming like mites on a cheese.

And they'll drive up a gimcracky hypocrite hearse ;
And they'll shove him inside, like a pig in a purse ;
And they'll carry him off to the burial crib ;
And the parson will come, like a rook in a bib.

Then they'll earth up his corpse in a daisy-bank hole ;
And the boom of the organ will sweep off his soul,
As you blow off the froth from a buzzy brown bowl :
And the bloodhound bell will jole—jole—jole.

O lawk ! can't I see it ? And afterwards too,
The Missus and children all making boohoo ;
And creeping like blackbirds down Sweetbriar Lane,
A-weeping, and wishing him with them again.

And the little pale girls in their bombazine stuff,
With their hair running loose like a parcel of fluff,
And nice flow'rs in their hands for the grave of "Papa"—
Such a comfort to Ben in his coffin, ha ha !

Rum business is life ! but it ends all a-piece
For the easy good chaps and the hard-working geese :
And why should they grudge a poor beast of a man
To be happy and jolly the best way he can ?

Says the mission-cove once,—“You’ve no sort of excuse
For to cumber the earth, if you’re no sort of use.”
“How,” says I, “could the beggarsome planet be filled,
If the coves that do nothing were taken and killed?”

Some fine day, by and by, I shall likely expire—
They’ll not take up Joe Pigworm in char’ots of fire ;—
Well ! when Gooseberry wants me I’ll meet him quite
brave :
I wonder what folk will strew over *my* grave !

Nick Chousem, I daresay, will miss me a bit,
And he’ll sit on my grave, and he’ll smoke there and
spit ;
And perhaps I’ll be missed by my brute of a dog,
For I lick him and kick him, and give him his prog.

Lawk, what do I care ! My blest body will rot,
My blest soul (if I’ve got one) will toddle to pot,
And I’ll treat the poor worms to a famous repast—
Oh yes, I’ll be useful to something at last !

THE FLITCH OF DUNMOW:

COME Micky and Molly and dainty Dolly,
Come Betty and blithesome Bill ;
Ye gossips and neighbours, away with your labours !
Come to the top of the hill.
For there are Jenny and jovial Joe ;
Jolly and jolly, jolly they go,
Jogging over the hill.

By apple and berry, 'tis twelve months merry
Since Jenny and Joe were wed !
And never a bother or quarrelsome pother
To trouble the board or bed.
So Joe and Jenny are off to Dunmow :
Happy and happy, happy they go,
Young and rosy and red.

Oh, Jenny's as pretty as doves in a ditty ;
And Jenny, her eyes are black ;
And Joey's a fellow as merry and mellow
As ever shouldered a sack.
So quick, good people, and come to the show !
Merry and merry, merry they go,
Bumping on Dobbin's back.

They've pranked up old Dobbin with ribands and
bobbin,
And tethered his tail in a string :
The fat flitch of bacon is not to be taken
By many that wear the ring !
Good luck, good luck, to Jenny and Joe !
Jolly and jolly, jolly they go.
Hark ! they merrily sing.

"O merry, merry, merry are we,
Happy as birds that sing in a tree !
All of the neighbours are happy to-day,
Merry are we and merry are they.
O merry are we ! for love, you see,
Fetters a heart and sets it free.

“O happy, happy, happy is life
For Joe (that’s me) and Jenny my wife !
All of the neighbours are happy, and say—
‘Never were folk so happy as they !’
O happy are we ! for love, you see,
Fetters a heart and sets it free.

“O jolly, jolly, jolly we go,
I and my Jenny, and she and her Joe.
All of the neighbours are jolly, and sing—
‘She is a queen, and he is a king !’
O jolly are we ! for love, you see,
Fetters a heart and sets it free.”

FEBRUARY IN THE PYRENEES.

THE maidenly snow on the distant peak,
Pure child of the firmament, faultless born,
Gazed fair at the sun, who seemed to seek
To melt into mercy her virgin scorn.

And a stern black rock stood apart, and frowned,
For he envied the snow in her lustrous white ;
And the grim grey shadows closed around,
In dread of the sun and his lordly light.

And the frail young beeches stood shivering near,
With their delicate branches brown and bare ;
But a bird in the thicket sang loud and clear,
For he scented the Spring through the frozen air.

From afar on the wind came the shepherd's cry,
From the grassy slopes and the boxwood bowers,
As his mottled flock to their home drew nigh,
To rest at their ease in the long dark hours.

Then the sun went down, with a last caress
From his golden lips to the fair white snow,
And all Winter came with a deathly stress
On the heights above and the vales below.

Yet a loveliness walked in the quiet dale,
By evening's power from her thrall released ;
For the silence spoke in a tender tale,
When songs and voices had sunk and ceased.

And silence itself more silent grew,
In the murmurous hush of the streamlet's tide
And the lull of the breezes, whispering through
The tall, sad firs on the mountain side.

PROFESSOR VEITCH.

MANORHEAD.

AN urn-round hollow'd glen, clos'd deep within
Its hills, that rise in smoothest symmetry,
To make for it a quiet arch of sky ;
A glen, in far past times deep-fill'd, and scoop'd
By ever-grinding ice, and wind-borne rain,—
The beauteous sculpture of the Unseen Hand
That guides insentient and unthinking powers
To Art's great purpose, through the ages dim,
And 'mid the darkness of the winter nights.

Its arch of sky in summer noon beholds,
From blue, calm height, the quiet depth below,
With heaven's unbroken glory grandly fill'd.
And then, from sparse white fleeting clouds there fall
Tremulous shadows on the pastoral green,—
As passing sadness on a beauteous face,—
That speed a-down the hill-sides, o'er the hollows,
And mingle with the fitful rush of burns,
And the pathetic voice of bleating lambs.

Again, the hollow urn with deep mist fills,
And veils its splendour, yet gives forth a sound
Of hidden waters from its depths remote,

As if the Spirit of the hills had there
Withdrawn within himself, to muse alone,
Deep murmuring o'er the secrets of the glens.

But now, a breath from heaven cleaves through the
mist,
And bares before the ardent eye blue rifts
Of sky, and sunny slopes of mottled hills ;
And then, the west'ring sun strikes slantingly,
And with a golden tide the glen o'erflows,
Of shimm'ring splendour, short-liv'd, fast pursued
Across the hollow, up the radiant slope
By hast'ning evening shadow, until at length
Day's one last passionate glow burns on the brow
Of the sun-fronting height, and passes thence
For ever into gloamin' of the moor.

THE CLOUD-BERRY FLOWER.

From "ON THE SCRAPE: LOOKING SOUTHWARDS."

AROUND me cluster quaint cloud-berry flowers,
That love the moist slopes of the highest tops,
Pale white, and delicate, and beautiful,
Yet lowly growing 'mid the black peat moss,—
No life with darker root and fairer bloom :
As if the hand of God had secret wrought
Amid the peaty chaos and decay
Of long deep buried years, and from the grave
Set free a form of beauty rare and bright,
To typify the glory and the grace
Which from the dust of death He will awake,
In course of time, on Resurrection morn !

From "OLD BORDER LIFE AND POETRY."

THINK, once in these old towers what feelings wrought,—
There bridal joy, and children's sunny smiles,
A mother's hopes and fears, a father's cares,
And all strong thrillings of this life have been,—
Home-welcome flashed to victor from old wars,
Dead burden borne from fatal feud o' night ;
Ay such that 'tis a marvel this dull earth
Should lie so callous 'neath the memories,
Unless it be that surely in its breast
It keeps them latent for the final morn.

There, where the mounds rise green o'er ancient home,
And all is silence save the ceaseless dash
Of passing waters o'er the whitened stones,—
There, was a sweet wife's clinging parting sad,
When husband 'bodin' in the feir of war,
Boune for dire Flodden's reckless chivalry,
Rode forth a gleaming wonder to young eyes
That eager peered from height of bartizan.
Long dread suspense there was, long hoped return,
And then dim sough of that disastrous day,
That passed, ill-omen'd, through the shuddering land !
But him his vassals' love bore, faithful, back
From hated southern field, from strangers' earth,
That he might lie beside his kindred dead ;
O'er moss and moor, and o'er brown mountain ways,
They wended with their burden, shoulder-borne.

At sundown, resting in a valley low,
They saw, between them and the western sky,
A solitary tower, grey, roofless, rise,
Where once a powerful lord had ruled the land ;

A darkening mass, but through a narrow bole
High near the top, there gleamed a ray serene,
As cast from heaven beyond ; and, lingering there,
The day slow dwined to shade, thus passed and died,
A strange, weird way of death on that tower-top,
That moved and thrilled in hearts of all these men
The waiting spirits of old memories !
Then sadly looked they on their own mailed dead,
And thought of all the prowess of his house,
And of the fair slight maidens orphaned there.

And on they wended through the moonlit night,
'Neath shadows of the crags, as passing palls
That softly touched the rigid, armoured form
They bore aloft ; by mountain burns they went,
That poured sad requiem, now paused, now moaned ;
Till, as the robins waked the Autumn morn,
They reached his own grey tower, and passed within
The iron gate ; and, 'neath the vaulted roof
Of dais hall, they laid him down,—where oft
He princely sat,—his pierc'd hauberk on,
His visor down ; on moveless shoulder spread
The silver shield that bore the sable heads :
Now, utmost feat of loyal duty done,
When o'er him widow sobbed and children wailed,
Sprung the first tears of those stern loving men.

Slow passing forth there was from that grey house,
And in the grave beside the dead was laid
Joy of one living heart, and that fresh mound
Seemed in a widow's eye earth's dearest thing.
Yet now, nor mound, nor stone is found to mark
His resting-place, and tower slow follows tomb,
Till house of life and house of death alike,

Beyond all memory gone, are smoothly dressed
In folds of summer grass, where dull sheep browse,
And shepherds, heedless, tread upon the fame,
The nameless fame, that lived in other days.

THE HART OF MOSSFENNAN.

“ They hunted it up, they hunted it down,
They hunted it in by Mossfennan toun,
And aye they gie'd it another turn,
Round by the links of the Logan Burn.”
—OLD BALLAD.

'NEATH Powmood Craig the hart was born,
And thence in the dawn of a summer morn,
By startled mother's side as it lay,
'Twas brought by a youth for his sweetheart's play.

She was a blue-eyed maiden fair,
Of stately mien and flaxen hair,
The daughter meet of an olden race,
Remote as a flower in a moorland place,
That blooms to all the great world lost,
And yet once seen is prized the most,—
Pure wood nymph she of Caledon,
Who loved all creatures wild and lone.

The gift to her was priceless, dear,
Since the giver, laid on a plaited bier,
Was borne away from a far-off field,
With a spotless name, with a blood-stained shield.

To her of an eve the creature bent,
While to him a simple grace she lent,
As she comely wreathed his noble head,
And decked his brow with the heather red.
Fond she gazed on those lustrous eyes
That met her look with a sweet surprise
At a face so tender, sad, and fair ;
She thought they read her soul's despair ;
And through her frame strange thrill would go,
As she caught the chequer'd pass and flow
Of trembling motions in their great deeps,
As light and shade o'er the mountain-steeps.

Far o'er the moors on a summer day
He'd pass and roam and freely stray ;
But ever, as shade of evening fell,
He turned to the home he loved so well.
His heart yearned aye to the lonely wild,
While his love was that of a human child,—
That set a bound to his nature free,—
For the maiden's face on Mossfennan Lee.

The hunters are out this summer morn,
They sweep the moors by hag and burn,
By rock and crag, each high resort,
For dear they love their noble sport.
They started a fee at Stanhope Head,
And down the glen the raches sped,
Fire-flauchts lanced up from each horse's side,
For the galling spur was prompt to chide.

Round he ran by Hopcarton Stell,
The spotted hounds pressed on him fell ;
I' the haugh he took the Tweed at the wide,
Then tossed his horns on Mossfennan side.

Still the cruel hounds are on his track,
In his ear the yell of the hurrying pack,
Fain to Mossfennan Tower he would turn,
But the chace is hot,—to the hill by the burn.

They hunted him high, they hunted him low,
They hunted him up by the mossy flow ;
The lee-long day, from early morn,
The Hopes rung loud with bouts of the horn.
No bloom of heather brae them stayed,
No birk-tree quiver or sheen of glade,
No touch of nature bent their will,
In hot blood onward, onward still.

Powmood, that ever in clear or mist,
In fray or hunt the foremost pressed,
Now speeding keen as north-west wind,
Late i' the day left all behind ;
Save Dreva's Laird, ne'er boding good,
Wide was he famed for a reiver rude,—
And hand that took kindly aye to blood,—
Left blacken'd walls where the homestead stood.

They hunted the hart these two alone,
Till the shadows lay in the afternoon ;
Where brae was stey and bank was steep,
The noble fee fell in a gallant leap.
They blew the mort on the Wormhill Head,
Where sore he sighed and then lay dead!

Oh ! why not let the creature be,
Bear his noble head o'er hill and lee,—
That ate but the wild roots, drank o' the spring
And roamed the moor a seemly thing,—

Joyed in the sun, flashed fleet in the storm,
Free in the grace of his God-given form !

The merry sport of the day is o'er ;
I' the gloamin' at the old tower door,
No gentle creature is there to greet
Her eyes that seek him, sad and sweet,—
Oh ! with love's last link 'tis sore to part,
And feel but the void of the aching heart

The merry sport of the day is o'er ;
Rose the creature's sigh its God before ?
Hearts harder growing through breach of ruth,
I ween this is eternal truth :
That gloamin', after words of strife,
Saw Powmood's blood on Dreva's knife !

MERLIN APOSTROPHISES THE SUN.

From "MERLIN."

THIS morn I bow before thee, lord of light
And life !—my hope, my fear, my reverence !
Of thee unworthy, and my early vows.
Far-gleaming arrows, piercing feeble mists,
Herald thine uprise ; low down in the vales,
That pour their loving tribute to the Tweed,
The waters shimmer 'mid the morning's joy ;
Around me burn-heads croon, and moorland birds
Awake, a-wing, pipe brief glad notes to thee,
The brightening lord of happy melody.

Now part in twain the curtains of the dawn,
Each hill-top is aflame, and thou hast set

Thyself, full-orbed, in empire o'er the day :—
Aglow as in that dawn when first enthroned,
The wasting ages taking nought from thee,
Nor tainted by the evil of this earth,
Thou layest now, as new birth of the morn,
Thy strength of glory on the circling hills.
I worship thee, O sovereign of the sky,
The symbol of the God who is unseen.

GWENDYDD'S SONG.

(From the same.)

GWENDYDD *takes Merlin's harp and sings.*

FRESH as of old the breeze of the morn,
Plaintive the notes that float
O'er the moor with the sunny thyme,
And the blue forget-me-not.

The rock-rose lifts its face to the sun,
It droops when its lord is set ;
The tormentil peers, the heather-bell glows ;
Sweet-eyed is the violet.

The lowly gale looks forth from the grass,
Silver-starring the brae ;
Th' Idæan vine holds its cup for the dew,
High where the burn-heads play,

As they flash in ripples of light,
Ere down they break to the glen
By green bank, red scaur, and grey rock,
Where the rowan shades the linn :

And the sun o'er all is moving in joy,
The strong lord of the sky ;
He stoops to bless the earth with his love,
Benign in his majesty.

And nought but raises its face to him,
Both herb and flower of earth ;
He, lord of all, that rules in heaven,
Hath care for the lowliest birth.

And thou art far from the face of God—
Whate'er thy craft or power—
Who knowest not first to bless with thy might,
As the sun in the morning hour.

THE VOICE OF THE DANISH BOY.

A TRADITION OF THE BORDER HILLS.

THE sun is passing behind the hill,
The eventide falls soft and still,
And down the glen from the western steep
The shadow moves in a dream-like sleep.
Peace there is for each farm and tower,
And the bliss and the rest of the gloamin' hour.

Around the vale on each wavy height
There streams the glow of a mellow light,
The farewell boon of the parting sun
To the hills that watch till his race is run.

But list ! A strange deep-passioned tone
Is borne from the height that light shines on,
As of harp-strings touched with a gentle hand,
And the voice as of song of a foreign land.

Not loud or strained is the mingled note,
Only loving ear can hear it float ;
It breaks not the calm of eve profound,
How gentle, yet deep, is that mountain sound
Now it thrills in hope, then it falls in pain,
Rises and thrills and falls again,
As if passion had sunk to soft regret
O'er its fruitless day of strife with fate,
And empire held and the pride of power
Were a mournful dream of the evening hour.

From the hill there came a shepherd fair,—
“ Had he heard the voice in the silent air ? ”
“ Yes ! ” was his answer,—“ I know it well ;
Oft in the evening I hear it swell,
When the stillness comes in the summer night,
And the far hill-tops are aglow with light.
'Tis suddenly born, 'tis speedily dead ;
As the gleam that glows on the mountain's head,
So suddenly comes and speedily goes
This strange weird song at the evening's close.
It dies with the light in a softening strain,
Till in the quiet eve it wakes again—
The plaint that follows the note of joy—
And I know 'tis the voice of ‘ the Danish Boy,’
Who sits a brief space on that green grave-mound,
Where say they his forebears' bones are found.”

Sweet burst of regret for the olden time,
When hope was high and life in its prime,—

The theme is old, the strain ever young,
Nor heard alone in a foreign tongue.
From many a heart in this life of ours
There comes a like strain in the evening hours,—
A thrill from hope perished, and effort unblessed,
When our day is o'er, and our sun's in the west !

IN MANOR.

AN AFTERNOON PICTURE, SEPTEMBER 11, 1887.

ITS deepest song the Manor sings,
This day of mist and grey-cloud rain,
And in its rising swell and fall
I hear again the sad refrain,

That meets me on an autumn day,
Has touched my ear in youthful morn,
When first by thee, loved stream, I strayed,—
A sorrowing voice, yet not forlorn.

Corn-fields are bare, and on the hills
The heather fades, the bent is white,
The bracken yellow 'mid the green ;
Yet through the rain a golden light

'Mid clouds and towers in heaven is tossed,
Strays on the hills, strikes mists beneath,
That rise and pass against the sky,
Blown by the mountain-spirit's breath.

'Tis a strange land 'mid those weird hills,
Where cloud and gleam are trailing high ;
What glances there ? one daring bird,
Hath pierced the tumult of the sky !

OCTOBER IN THE SCOTTISH LOWLANDS.

THE russet's o'er the heather,
The grace of the bracken gone ;
Sere and dun each moorland space,
Where the gleam of summer shone

The mist creeps o'er the height,
The burn comes hoarser down,
The wandering wind is wailing
Among the bent "sae brown."

The blaeberry leaf, blood-red,
Flushes the face of the brae,
As a crimson drop distilled
From a deed in an olden fray.

The last golden sheaves of the haugh
Are borne on the creaking wain ;
Another year is upgathered,
Ne'er to be mine again !

The varied days may pass,
The varied times go by !
Let the spirit in me grow,
Seasons may ceaseless fly !

On the sun-bright hues of summer
May come a sober grey,
And the wreath on autumn's mellow crown
Have the pathos of decay.

For the sunny hours I've known
No vain regrets I find,
If, passing, they but leave me
Fresh heart and a wider mind !

In Memoriam.

JOCKIE :

COMPANION AND FRIEND, WHO DIED OF OLD AGE,
DEC. 18, 1876, IN HIS EIGHTEENTH YEAR.

COLD, stiff, and dead, thou liest to-day,
My friend on many a pathless way,
Up glen, o'er hill, and moorland lone :
No fear hadst thou, aye bounding on,
For I was there !

On many a misty top we've been,
For long where nought was heard or seen,
Thou by my side,—thy lint-white hair,
To me a gladsome vision there,
Lighting the gloom !

By weird grey cairn on windy height,
Where, far away from human sight,
We sat an hour in storm or shine,
Thy wondering eyes would peer in mine,
In wistful gaze.

If but a crust I gave to thee,
How grateful was thy look to me !
Thou ne'er didst want, yet well I knew
Thou wert as faithful and as true,
Whate'er thy lot.

One common joy, one common life,
We had apart from human strife ;
I was thy trust, and thou didst lend
To me the charm of single friend,
A blessing rare.

Wilful sometimes, as mountain hare,
The source to me of heartfelt care,
Would tempt thee to a vagrant chase ;
Threatened, till back thou cam'st apace,
To be forgiven.

Since first we went among the heather,
'Tis fourteen years, and, there together,
Thou hast pursued thy silent thought,
And in my brain have fancies wrought,
Some marked, some lost.

But, gentle soul, I cannot say
That any gleam of fancy's ray
E'er touched me with the softening power
Thy love and faith, from hour to hour,
Aye had for me.

And now this eve thy grave is low,
And white beneath the Christmas snow ;
The silent moon gleams calm o'er thee,
As it shall steal one night o'er me,
 When laid as thou.

Thy simple faith, thy loving trust,
Thy kindling eye,—are these but dust ?
Cast forth as weeds to rot in earth,
With nothing of immortal worth ?
 No ! God is just !

PROFESSOR NICHOL.

DONNA VERA.

TAKE my homage, Dea certe ! crowned among the stars
above,
Goddess, passionless, disdaining ebbs and flows of human
love ;
Seated in thy palace, queenly, where thy radiance glows
serenely,
O'er the mists and wandering meteors that amid our
vapours move :

Donna Vera, Donna Vera !

Hard thy service : Thou demandest all the treasures of
our store ;
Jealous of a rival worship, and constraining to adore ;
Ancient altars overturning, tearful pleading for them
spurning,
Flinging into air the phantoms, pressed Ixion-like of
yore :

Donna Vera, Donna Vera !

Aphrodite wooed and won me, rising roseate from the
sea,
When the spring of life was flushing, and the fresh blood
throbbing free ;

Swift-heeled Hermes, bright thoughts bringing, Phœbus,
wars and wisdoms singing,
Twining Nymphs and Graces lured me, ere my longing
set on thee :

Donna Vera, Donna Vera !

Then the solemn glooms and glories of the dim transition
days,
Vestals chanting Roman anthems, Covenanters Hebrew
lays—
Broken fragments of thy meaning, simple Faith's
impatient gleanings—
Held me in religious rapture, till thy Presence broke
the maze :

Donna Vera, Donna Vera !

Cold and rocky, uncompanioned pathways lead us to the
height
Where thou reignest, Maiden Mistress, in thy majesty
and might.
Who would find thee must surrender oft more gentle
hearts and tender ;
But thy smile is our life's splendour, and thy eyes are
wells of light :

Donna Vera, Donna Vera !

Stern the call to quit our homesteads, put away all
childish things ;
Hence the weak world fears thee, clinging to long-
cherished leading strings.
Let me sing thy praises only,—whatsoever summit lonely
Bears thee skyward—saved and sheltered in the shadow
of thy wings :

Donna Vera, Donna Vera !

From "PICTURES BY THE WAY."

I.

THE CHAPEL.

JUST after the sunset, yesterday,
When the last of the crowd had passed away,
I went to the little church to pray.

They had jostled me so, the rabble rout,
That my radical zeal was half worn out :
I wished them cleaner and less devout.

My spirit was clouded with discontent,
And the faith I had was nearly spent,
When I came, like a thief impenitent,

Weary and foiled in the weary race,
To hide myself from my own disgrace,
And steal some comfort from the place.

Nothing for naught, in the world, they say,
And little they get who have little to pay :
But the chapel was open all the day.

The choir was as free as the aisles of a wood,
And I found, when under its shade I stood,
That the air of the church was doing me good.

In the silence, after the city's smoke,
My spirit grew calmer, and thoughts awoke
From sleep, that I fancied dead.—I spoke:—

"Perchance they were not unwisely bold
Who called this God's house—the men of old—
Does the Shepherd wait within the fold?"

So, up the choir, with footsteps faint,
In the fading light of each shining saint,
I wondered if He would hear my plaint.

There was something surely in kneeling where
A thousand hearts had left their care,
That helped to contradict despair.

"No hope remains in the world," I cried,
"So far I have wandered, so much denied;
Is there any way left as yet untried?"

I love; but it only makes death more drear
And truth more distant; I love in fear,
'Tis not with the love that seeth clear.

I toil; but the range of my restless glance
Still stretches afar; an aimless dance
I see, and name it the whirl of chance.

They are blown together, like dust in the wind—
The feeble frame and the lordly mind—
And only their ashes are left behind.

My words are bitter, what proof remains
To mark them false? Are a prisoner's chains
Lighter because he forgets his pains?

Athwart the vista of vanished time,
Is a mocking gleam of a ruined prime
And discord that drowns the morning chime.

Idly we long for the innocent days,
When life was worship and prayer was praise,
Now all is wrapt in a blinding maze.

Idly we beat at the iron gates,
If the sole response that our cry awaits
Is the heartless law of the heedless fates.

The fires of our passion are spent in vain,
The stars went out long since in the rain ;
Can Faith once lost be found again ?

'Tis dark without it ; but how can we,
When the cloud murk thickens, pretend to see,
Across the darkness, an image of Thee.

Hear me ; for mine is a soul in need.
On the cold damp ground, I sink and bleed.
Hear me, and show Thou art God indeed !”

At the word, a torrent of music rolled
From arch to arch, like a flood of gold,
Fraught with the burden of thoughts untold.

The chords, as struck by a seraph band,
Seemed an answering thrill from the spirit land—
“ Let there be light !” while, near at hand,

The crucifix shone o'er the altar stair,
Till its beacon made me at last aware
Of the lamp that was burning faintly there.

I fixed my gaze on the steadfast ray,
Till it seemed as if earth and its troubles lay
In the valley of restlessness far away.

A dream-like procession of early years
Swept through my spirit ; the frost that sears
Our life fell from me in soothing tears.

Then throbbed out slowly the organ blast,
But still the unfading lustre cast
A glimmer on labyrinths of my Past.

God makes each heart a cathedral dim,
With its vaults where gloomy vapours swim,
And its altar burning still for Him.

I woke from my trance, in the church alone,
And the church-bell marked that an hour had flown,
As it pealed in a sombre monotone.

Like a deep voice singing a noble song,
It bade me arise, and amid the throng
Keep bright my lamp, my courage strong.

II.

MARE MEDITERRANEUM.

A LINE of light ! it is the inland Sea,
The least in compass and the first in fame ;
The gleaming of its waves recalls to me
Full many an ancient name.

As through my dreamland float the days of old,
The forms and features of their heroes shine :
I see Phœnician sailors bearing gold
From the Tartessian mine.

Seeking new worlds, storm-tossed Ulysses ploughs
Remoter surges of the winding main ;
And Grecian captains come to pay their vows,
Or gather up the slain.

I see the temples of the " Violet Crown "
Burn upward in the hour of glorious flight ;
And mariners of uneclipsed renown,
Who won the great sea fight.

I hear the dashing of a thousand oars,
The angry waters take a deeper dye ;
A thousand echoes vibrate from the shores
With Athens' battle-cry.

Again the Carthaginian rovers sweep,
With sword and commerce, on from shore to shore :
In visionary storms the breakers leap
Round Syrtis, as of yore.

Victory, sitting on the Seven Hills,
Had gained the world when she had mastered thee :
Thy bosom with the Roman war-note thrills,
Wave of the inland sea.

Then, singing as they sail in shining ships,
I see the monarch minstrels of Romance,
And hear their praises murmured through the lips
Of the fair dames of France.

Across the deep another music swells,
On Adrian bays a later splendour smiles ;
Power hails the marble city where she dwells
Queen of a hundred isles.

Westward the galleys of the Crescent roam,
And meet the Pisan challenge in the breeze,
Till the long Dorian palace lords the foam
With stalwart Genovese.

But the light fades ; the vision wears away ;
I see the mist above the dreary wave.
Blow winds of Freedom, give another day
Of glory to the brave !

III.

LUCERNE.

THE lake beneath, and the city,
And the quiet glorious hills,
Bending beneath the sunset,
With strong submissive wills :

The mound above, and the ramparts,
And the river that swiftly flows,
Between the walls, to the meadows :
In the evening's deep repose.

Three towers above, in the sunlight,
Are gleaming in burnished gold,
Over one the twilight is creeping,
It stands in the shadow, cold :—

Four stages of life recalling—
Our birth, our love, our toil,
And the last that lies in the shadow,
And waits to receive the spoil.

IV.

ST. POL DE LÉON.

IN Finisterre, between two winding bays
Where northern billows beat the craggy shore,
Steeped in a dream of dim religious days,
The sombre village nestles as of yore :
Careless of changes come and gone,
St. Pol de Léon slumbers on.

Safe in the hush of convent hall, and spire
Star-lit by foils that pierce the tapering stone,
While anthems echo through the listening choir,
Or monk or sister haunts the aisles alone,
Remote from ways of modern strife
Lingers the mediæval life.

Pinnacle, turret, belfry, shaft and tower,
 Cloister and transept keep the same repose ;
 As, in secluded haunt, the lily flower,
 In white tranquillity, regardless grows ;
 While, o'er the sheltered garden wall,
 The tides of passion rise and fall.

Ere saintly Louis led the last crusade,
 This Breton Minster was a beacon light ;
 Serene in distance and secure in shade
 From sound of Crécy's charge or Poitiers' fight ;
 Nor storm of Jacquerie awoke,
 Nor Agincourt the silence broke.

The Maid whose lustre shames the envious years,
 Rekindles Freedom in a thankless land ;
 The Sceptre overways the banded peers ;
 Rash Francis yields to Charles' o'er-mastering hand :
 New worlds are found, new creeds have birth,
 Here all is of the earlier earth.

On Roscoff's ledge alights the Fay, whose spell
 Lures love to death, first Queen of Ronsard's lays :
 Now it is " Henri Quatre et Gabrielle,"
 And now the shifting tune is " Louis Treize " :
 Let mistress rule, or courtiers lie,
 Here vespers chime where surges die.

Richelieu may write and reign, or Mazarin
 Crush in his coils of craft the wrestling Fronde,
 Turenne or Condé rival laurels win
 To crown the " grand Monarque " : far leagues
 beyond
 The cannon music on the Rhine,
 They worship here in peace divine.

The clash and clamour of the ceaseless fray,
Round Blenheim, Ramillies, Malplaquet, beats :
Orgies of Orleans stain the graceless day,
And Rosbach seals a kingdom. In these streets,
Nought but the lapse of time is told,
And shepherds' tales to simple fold.

The Earthquake of uplifted misery shakes
Peoples and princes, ancient Faith and Throne :
On wastes of snow the Gallic fury breaks :
Caged in his isle the Eagle dies alone :
On this, far drawn, sequestered strand
They roll the chaunts of Hildebrand.

Again the Drapeau of the Fleur-de-Lys
Flaunts forth and falls ; but Blanche or Oriflamme
Or Rouge or Tricolor, by this strange sea,
Seem as the interchange of breeze and calm :
Through all life's tempests come and gone,
St. Pol de Léon slumbers on.

v.

H. W. L.

THE roar of Niagara dies away,
The fever heats of war and traffic fade,
While the soft twilight melts the glare of day
In this new Helicon, the Muses' glade.

The roof that sheltered Washington's retreat,
Thy home of homes, America, I find
In this memorial mansion, where we greet
The full-toned lyrist, with the gentle mind.

Here have thy chosen spirits met and flowered,
 Season on season, 'neath magnetic spells
 Of him who, in his refuge, rose-embowered,
 Remote from touch of envious passion dwells.

Here Concord's sage and Harvard's wit contend
 The wise, the true, the learned of the land,
 Grave thoughts, gay fantasies together blend
 In subtle converse, 'neath his fostering hand.

With other forms than those of mortal guest
 The house is haunted ; visions of the morn,
 Voices of night that soothe the soul to rest,
 Attend the shapes, by aery wand reborn.

Serene companions of a vanished age,
 Noiseless they tread the once familiar floors ;
 Or, later offspring of the poet's page,
 Throng the threshold, crowd the corridors.

"Sweet Preciosa" beside the listening stair
 Flutters expectant while Victorian sings ;
 Evangeline, with cloistral eyes of prayer,
 Folds her white hands, in shade of angels' wings.

Conquistadors of Castile pace the hall ;
 Or red-skinned warriors pass the challenge round ;
 Or Minnehaha's laughter, as the fall
 Of woodland waters, makes a silver sound.

Thor rolls the thunders of his fiery vaunt,
 The answering battle burns in Olaf's eyes ;
 Or love crowned Elsie, lures us with the chaunt
 That lulled the waves, 'neath star-hung Genoan skies.

Here grim-faced captains of colonial days
Salute the builders of old German rhyme ;
And choral troops of children hymn the praise
Of their own master minstrel of all time.

Fair shrine of pure creations ! linger long
His bright example, may his fame increase :
Discord nor distance ever dim his song,
Whose ways are pleasantness, whose paths are
peace.

Nor Hawthorne's manse, with ancient moss bespread,
Nor Irving's hollow is with rest so rife,
As this calm haven, where the leaves are shed
Round Indian summers of a golden life.

CONTRASTS.

I.

YES ! it was simply greatness,
There was nothing else I could say ;
I had fenced my path more straightly,
But his was the kinglier way.

He had all the march of a monarch,
And the eye that claims command,
And he looked around on his kingdom,
As he led us by the hand.

In the reckoning of little virtues
'Twas I who bore the palm ;
But he faced the world more nobly
With that imperial calm.

Wrestling where he was conquered,
I waged, till eve, the fight ;
But he fell like the stars, as grandly,
And he rose as the dawning light.

Whatever new fields await us,
However new lands employ,
'Twill be mine the ceaseless struggle
And his the serener joy.

And if ever we meet in the future,
When an æon has rolled away,
On the heights of the great Hereafter
He will rule as he rules to-day.

For wherever we stand together,
In the light of that larger morn,
'Mid all those wondrous changes
He will still be the elder born.

II.

PRIZES at school, and places
Of honour in life he won ;
Now he claims to have finished
The task that we both begun.

Keen to perceive, and steadfast
In working out his plan,
Success is his, and the homage
That marks a successful man.

I am a broken pillar,
Left on the sands alone :
He is a gilded column,
Under a royal throne.

Finding his fortune fairly,
Prudently true and kind ;
There is something he can't get over,
He has but a little mind.

He rose, by honest efforts,
To the promise of wealth and fame ;
And yet, for thrice his station,
I would not wear his name.

He strove—but never boldly ;
Attained—but was never great ;
More like a childish marvel
Than a brave man breasting fate.

The smallness of his boyhood,
The weakness of his prime,
He will bear with him, like nature,
However high he climb.

He dare not write a sentence
Of good old English ring ;
But hovers, both ways smiling,
And winds about a thing.

Safe o'er the summer waters,
When sunshine floods them through ;
Far from the reach of rapids,
He paddles his canoe.

He fronts his fawning world,
And triumphs in his way,
But what he'll think to-morrow
Was my thought yesterday.

Since first he sought my counsel,
I have been half his creed ;
His fashion is to follow,
My humour is to lead.

From "THE DEATH OF THEMISTOCLES."

Themistocles. I lived
Two lives apart ; for, while the noonday sun
Burnt on the passions of the fiery strife,
In hours of rest withdrawn from restless day,
I bent o'er mounds of half-forgotten dead,
And roamed by citadels of Argive kings,
Compeers of Cecrops, ere or Minos ruled
Or Jason clove the deep. Here Inachus,
The first earth-born of Tethys, left his name ;
And Io suffered woe, till, Hermes' dart
Smiting the watcher with the hundred eyes,
From Hera's wrath she wandered on, like me
O'er floods and hills and by the desert track
Of winding continents to utmost Nile.
Hither Egyptian Danaos brought his maids

Fatal to marriage, but for one true wife.
Here Danae blossomed 'neath the golden shower
And bore the Gorgon-slayer to the world.
Here, of the race so oft by Zeus renewed,
Sprang Heracles, whom Tiryns' square-stone walls
Attest the mightiest, and Lernean font—
Poseidon's gift for Amymone's love,
Whence Nauplius—with the Nemean vale crag-set
And cataract smitten ; all which haunts I saw ;
And musing by Mycenæ's lion gate
Recalled Atrides' doom, Orestes' curse,
Electra's solace, and Athene's aid.
So sped my years in Argolis, the crown
Of Hellas, and the front ere Spartan coils
Closed round her stifling, while the air was full
Of tidings from my city, how she grew
Greater in war and art to celebrate
The splendour of her nuptials with the sea.

Themistocles.

Peace, boy !

Hast thou not known me better, all those years
Of so long silence, as thou floutest them,
As dream my watchful spirit, never bent
Before their worst revilings, would accept
Mercy misnamed for Justice still denied,
Alms from the men who never gave my due,
But for a moment's flash ? Insulting boon
Designed, if hinted, for disgrace ! Am I,
Hunted from land to land, from sea to sea,
Panting and breathless o'er Epirus' wastes,
Reft of my own by rage of enemies,
The sport of waves that seemed to serve their hate,
Till I found refuge where I stand so sure
Though profitless,—am I to beg the stale

And wretched charities of men who snatched
Their profits, grudged my glories, slurred my name?—
The crowd who ever asking never gave,
Laid all their burdens on me, cast aside
When I had borne them, wearied of my gifts,
Scowled at my presence, then assailed my life—
Once wingless kites, who, nurtured in my nest,
As soon as fledged found beaks to peck at me,
Their master, who had forged them arms to strike,
And given them tongues to mutter or to shriek
Their rancorous venoms.

Themistocles. Aristides talked
Of his old comrade in the fight, and sought
To keep our public free from private jars ;
Yet stood apart in grim integrity
And wisdom held infallible, his course
Being set as firm to thwart me in debate
As Cimon's own. I grant his patriot zeal
But fail to clear him of a jealous shade.
So with another whom I once advanced,
Slighter Lysimachus, whose lusty limbs,
Unmatched in the Pentathlon, left his mind
To veer, as if aspiring to some place
The rabble have for auction. When acclaim
Followed my lightest breath, no more applause
Came from a score of clappers than from him ;
But when they hooted, with apologies,
And courteous manner cloaking matter's lack,
He joined, by nature, the majority.
Others of subtler sort, my downward steps
Pursued with smiles and, offering service, slipped
Into the hearts that I was ousted from.

Some shifts I laugh to think on of good men ;
'Mong these, the archon, leader of the year,
A genial comrade when the winds were mild,
But weak in storms, and with his soul so fed
On plaudits, that the murmur of a mob
Seared it like iron, till his nature grew
Barren of battle, and his humour changed
Smothered in caution, to mere mimicry.
So with the rest, in fear or hope they turned,
Or hid themselves from compromise with me,
When Fortune shook her wings.

Extracts from "HANNIBAL."

CAUTION'S a virtue that o'ercharged is vice,
And dull content is poverty of soul.
Who shuns offence and holds with neither side,
Who dreads the deep and never dares to swim,
Who fears to trip and never tries to run,
May yet in walking stumble.

Who works for dues
Of honour, and a following of friends,
Is but a prouder kind of mercenary,
Drawing upon a bank that often breaks.

The Gods who rule the earth are far removed,
Their dwelling-place is all the round of Heaven.
The stars, the moon, the hill-tops, and the sea,
The sun himself, are but their sentinels.
Their temples are the oracles that stand

Nigh to the gates of their serene abodes ;
 They come there, when we meet them, with a heart
 That has a single aim, and with a voice
 That speaks their language.

ON THE SOUTH SHORE OF AVERNUS.

Hannibal. The Gods are not of Rome or Italy:
 They dwell in earth's abyss or with the stars,
 Their shrines are where we bring heroic hearts :
 Yet there are spots which to the minds of men
 Seem set apart for converse with the Gods.
 On temples by the sea our fancy roams
 To Hercules the Roamer : on high hills
 Astarte pours her radiance : Tanais bends
 Her bow in tempests, and the thunder hails
 Chrysaor's sword-flash. On this sultry marge
 Of nether night and Hades, let us bow
 Before the Powers of Silence, Death and Dreams ;
 Of that chaotic Air that, o'er the deep
 Long brooding, brought forth lightnings in the sky ;
 And of the Fires pent up, ere Æon rose,
 Parent of all our world, nor first nor last.

Myra. Ah, none can know how soon the world
 forgets,
 But they whose heroes have a second death
 When their name vanishes. To-morrow's sun
 Puts out the light of all her yesterdays.
 We pass, and make a space for those who pass
 In the same careless Lethe, that rolls on,
 Whether we live, or die, or stand, or fall,
 Without a tremble on its even way.

Who spurns at "images"
Proclaims his fathers nameless, taints himself
With envy that decries the thing it longs for
And vanity that ridicules the pride
It vainly apes.

THE PASSAGE OF THE ALPS.

Sosilus. What sights, what sounds, what wonders
marked our way !
Terrors of ice, and glories of the snow,
Wide treacherous calms, and peaks that rose in storm
To hold the stars, or catch the morn, or keep
The evening with a splendour of regret ;
Or, jutting through the mists of moonlight, gleamed
Like pearly islands from a seething sea ;—
On dawn-swept heights, the war-cry of the winds ;
The wet wrath round the steaming battlements,
From which the sun leapt upward, like a sword
Drawn from its scabbard ;—the green chasms that cleft
Frost to its centre ; echoes drifting far,
Down the long gorges of the answering hills ;
The thunders of the avalanche ;—the cry
Of the strange birds that hooted in amaze
To see men leaving all the tracks of men ;—
Snow-purpling flowers, first promise of the earth ;
Then welcome odours of the woods less wild ;
Grey lustres looming on the endless moor ;
The voice of fountains, in eternal fall
From night and solitude to life and day !

Of men who rise above the common herd
Of goats and sheep, that butt and breed and die,
The most are clipped in pieces by themselves ;

Frittered in flickering fancies ; half inclined
To fleet delights and then, with brief resolves,
Taking up languid duties ; mingling arts
Irreconcilable, or balancing
Prudence and valour, and their like's esteem,
Which is a weakness added to their own :
And so they dance like puppets jerked awry.
Who sets himself one way and pulls one string,
His Will, become a Fate, compels the world,
And while the rest stand gazing, he commands.

Now all is still. The Night, that waves aside,
And shames the discords of the clamorous Day,
Sheds a false peace upon the weary land.
Her stars, from soundless deeps, despise our storms.
They glance, through avenues of time to come,
On all the races of the world at rest.
But, while the fevers of our passion burn,
In this the childish age of vexed mankind,
Our march is made, our music set, in strife.
The red right hand beats back usurping wrong :
And Justice lies o'er heights of angry war.